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American Editor: James Peter Cooney Saint Marys Georgia

*European Editor: Derek Savage Pettit's Lane Dry Drayton
Cambs. England*

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THE NIGHTMARE*

BY

D. H. Lawrence

E had known such different deep fears. In Sicily, a sudden fear in the night of some single murderer, some single thing hovering as it were out of the violent past, with the intent of murder. Out of the old Greek past, that had been so vivid, sometimes an unappeased spirit of murderous-hate against the usurping moderns. A sudden presence of murder in the air, because of something which the modern psyche had excluded, some old and vital thing which Christianity has cut out. An old spirit, waiting for vengeance. But in England, during the later years of the war, a true and deadly fear of the criminal *living* spirit which arose in all the stay-at-home bullies who governed the country during those years. From 1916 to 1919 a wave of

* From the novel *Kangaroo*.

criminal lust rose and possessed England, there was a reign of terror, under a set of indecent bullies like Bottomly of *John Bull* and other bottom dogs of the House of Commons. Then Somers had known what it was to live in a perpetual state of semi-fear: the fear of the criminal public and the criminal government. The torture was steadily applied, during those years after Asquith fell, to break the independent soul in any man who would not hunt with the criminal mob. A man must identify himself with the criminal mob, sink his sense of truth, of justice, and of human honour, and bay like some horrible unclean hound, bay with a loud sound, from slaver-ing, unclean jaws.

This Richard Lovat Somers had steadily refused to do. The deepest part of a man is his sense of essential truth, essential honour, essential justice. This deepest self makes him abide by his own feelings, come what may. It is not sentimentalism. It is just the male human creature, the thought-adventurer, driven to earth. Will he give in or won't he?

Many men, carried on a wave of patriotism and true belief in democracy, entered the war. Many men were driven in out of belief that it was necessary to save their property. Vast numbers of men were just

bullied into the army. A few remained. Of these, many became conscientious objectors.

Somers tiresomely belonged to no group. He would not enter the army, because his profoundest instinct was against it. Yet he had no conscientious objection to war. It was the whole spirit of the war, the vast mob-spirit, which he would never acquiesce in. The terrible, terrible war, made so fearful because in every country practically every man lost his head, and lost his own centrality, his own manly isolation in his own integrity, which alone keeps life real. Practically every man being caught away from himself, as in some horrible flood, and swept away with the ghastly masses of other men, utterly unable to speak, or to feel for himself, or to stand on his own feet, delivered over and swirling in the current, suffocated for the time being. Some of them to die forever. Most of them to come back home victorious in circumstance, but with their inner pride gone: inwardly lost. To come back home, many of them, to wives who had egged them on to this downfall in themselves: black bitterness. Others to return to a bewildered wife who had in vain tried to keep her man true to himself, tried and tried, only to see him at last swept away. And oh, when he was swept

away, how she loved him. But when he came back, when he crawled out like a dog out of a dirty stream, a stream that had suddenly gone slack and turbid: when he came back covered with outward glory and inward shame, then there was the price to pay.

And there *is* this bitter and sordid after-war price to pay because men lost their heads, and worse, lost their inward, individual integrity. And when a man loses his inward, isolated, manly integrity, it is a bad day for that man's true wife. A true man should not lose his head. The greater the crisis, the more intense should be his isolated reckoning with his own soul. And *then* let him act, of his own whole self. Not fling himself away: or much worse, let himself be *dragged* away, bit by bit.

Awful years — '16, '17, '18 '19 — the years when the damage was done. The years when the world lost its real manhood. Not for lack of courage to face death. Plenty of superb courage to face death. But no courage in any man to face his own isolated soul, and abide by its decision. Easier to sacrifice oneself. So much easier!

Richard Lovat was one of those utterly unsatisfactory creatures who just would not. He had no

conscientious objections. He knew that men *must* fight, some time in some way or other. He was no Quaker, to believe in perpetual peace. He had been in Germany times enough to know *how* much he detested the German military creatures: mechanical bullies they were. They had once threatened to arrest him as a spy and had insulted him more than once. Oh, he would never forgive *them*, in his inward soul. But then the industrialism and commercialism of England, with which patriotism and democracy became identified: did not these insult a man and hit him pleasantly across the mouth? How much humiliation had Richard suffered, trying to earn his living! How had they tried, with their beastly industrial self-righteousness, to humiliate him as a separate, single man? They wanted to bring him to heel even more than the German militarist did. And if a man is to be brought to any heel, better a spurred heel than the heel of a financier. So Richard decided later, when the years let him think things over, and see where he was.

Therefore when the war came, his instinct was against it. When the Asquith government so softly foundered, he began to suffer agonies. But when the Asquith government went right under, and in

its place came that *John Bull* government of '16, '17, '18, then agonies gave way to tortures. He was summoned to join the army: and went. Spent a night in barracks with forty other men, and not one of these other men but felt like a criminal condemned, bitter in dejection and humiliation. Was examined in the morning by two doctors, both gentlemen, who knew the sacredness of another naked man: and was rejected.

So, that was over. He went back home. And he made up his mind what he would do. He would never voluntarily make a martyr of himself. His feeling was private to himself, he didn't want to force it on any other man. He would just act alone. For the moment, he was rejected as medically unfit. If he was called up again, he would go again. But he would never serve.

"Once," he said to Harriet, "that they have really conscripted me, I will never obey another order, if they kill me."

Poor Harriet felt scared, and didn't know what to say.

"If ever," he said, looking up from his own knees in their old grey flannel trousers, as he sat by the fire, "if ever I see my legs in khaki, I shall die. But

they shall never put my legs in khaki."

That first time, at the barracks in the west, they had treated him with that instinctive regard and gentleness which he usually got from men who were not German militarist bullies, or worse, British commercial bullies. For instance, in the morning in that prison barracks room, these unexamined recruits were ordered to make their beds and sweep the floor. In obedience, so far, Richard Lovat took one of the heavy brooms. He was pale, silent, isolated: a queer figure, a young man with a beard. The other soldiers — or must-be soldiers — had looked at him as a queer fish, but that he was used to.

"Say, Dad," said a fattish young fellow older than himself, the only blatherer, a loose fellow who had come from Canada to join up and was already cursing: he was a good deal older than Somers.

"Say, Dad," said this fellow, as they sat in the train coming up, "all that'll come off to-morrow — Qck, Qck!" — and he made two noises, and gave two long swipes with his fingers round his chin, to intimate that Richard's beard would be cut off.

"We'll see," said Richard, smiling with pale lips.

He said in his heart, the day his beard was shaven he was beaten, lost. He identified it with his iso-

late manhood. He never forgot that journey up to Bodmin, with the other men who were called up. They were all bitterly, desperately miserable, but still manly: mostly very quiet, yet neither sloppy nor frightened. Only the fat, loose fellow who had given up a damned good job in Canada to come and serve this bloody country, etc., etc., was a rant-er and a bragger. Somers saw him afterwards naked: strange, fat, soft, like a woman. But in another carriage the men sang all the time, howling like dogs in the night:

*« I'll be your sweetheart, if you will be mine,
All my life I'll be you-o-o-ur Valentine.
Bluebells I'll gather, take them and be true,
When I'm a man, my plan will be to marry you. »*

Wailing down the lost corridors of hell, surely, those ghastly melancholy notes —

« All my li-i-i-fe — I'll be your Valentine. »

Somers could never recall it without writhing. It isn't death that matters, but the loss of the integral soul. And these men howled as if they were going to their doom, helplessly, ghastly. It was not the death in front. It was the surrender of all their old beliefs, and all their sacred liberty.

Those bluebells! They were worse than the earlier songs. In 1915, autumn, Hampstead Heath, leaves burning in heaps, in the blue air, London still almost pre-war London: but by the pond on the Spaniards Road, blue soldiers, wounded soldiers in their bright hospital blue and red, always there: and earth-colored recruits with pale faces drilling near Parliament Hill. The pre-war world still lingering, and some vivid strangeness, glamour thrown in. At night all the great beams of the searchlights, in great straight bars, feeling across the London sky, feeling the clouds, feeling the body of dark overhead. And then Zeppelin raids: the awful noise and the excitement. Somers was never afraid then. One evening he and Harriet walked from Platts Lane to the Spaniards Road, across the Heath: and there, in the sky, like some god vision, a Zeppelin, and the searchlights catching it, so that it gleamed like a manifestation in the heavens, then losing it, so that only the strange drumming came down out of the sky where the searchlights tangled their feelers. There it was again, high, high, high, tiny, pale, as one might imagine the Holy Ghost, far, far above. And the crashes of guns, and the awful hoarseness of shells bursting in the city. Then gradually, quiet. And from

Parliament Hill, a great red glare below, near Saint Paul's. Something ablaze in the city. Harriet was horribly afraid. Yet as she looked up at the far-off Zeppelin she said to Somers:

"Think, some of the boys I played with when I was a child are probably in it."

And he looked up at the far, luminous thing, like a moon. Were there men in it? Just men, with two vulnerable legs and warm mouths. The imagination could not go so far.

Those days, that autumn . . . people carried about chrysanthemums: and the smell of burning leaves: and the wounded, bright blue soldiers with their red cotton neckties, sitting together like macaws on the seats, pale and different from other people. And the star Jupiter very bright at nights over the cup hollow of the Vale, on Hampstead Heath. And the war news always coming, the war horror drifting in, drifting in, the prices rising, excitement growing, people going mad about the Zeppelin raids. And always the one song:

*"Keep the home fires burning,
Though your hearts be yearning."*

It was in 1915 the old world ended. In the winter 1915-1916 the spirit of the old London collapsed;

the city, in some way, perished, perished from being a heart of the world, and became a vortex of broken passions, lusts, hopes, fears, and horrors. The integrity of London collapsed, and the genuine debasement began, the unspeakable baseness of the press and the public voice, the reign of that bloated ignominy, *John Bull*.

No man who has really consciously lived through this can believe again absolutely in democracy. No man who has heard reiterated in thousands of tones from all the common people, during the crucial years of the war: "I believe in *John Bull*. Give me *John Bull*," can ever believe that in any crisis a people can govern itself, or is ever fit to govern itself. During the crucial years of the war, the people chose, and chose Bottomleyism. Bottom enough.

The well-bred, really cultured classes were on the whole passive resisters. They shirked their duty. It is the business of people who really know better to fight tooth and nail to keep up a standard, to hold control of authority. Laisser-aller is as guilty as the actual, stinking mongrelism it gives place to.

It was in mid-winter of 1915 that Somers and Harriet went down to Cornwall. The spirit of the war – the spirit of collapse and of human ignominy,

had not travelled so far yet. It came in advancing waves.

We hear so much talk of the bravery and horrors at the front. Brave the men were, all honour to them. It was at home the world was lost. We hear too little of the collapse of the proud human spirit at home, the triumph of sordid, rampant, raging meanness. "The bite of a jackal is blood-poisoning and mortification." And at home stayed all the jackals, middle-aged, male and female jackals. And they bit us all. And blood-poisoning and mortification set in.

We should never have let the jackals loose, and patted them on the head. They were feeding on our death all the while.

Away in the west Richard and Harriet lived alone in their cottage by the savage Atlantic. He hardly wrote at all, and never any propaganda. But he hated the war, and said so to the few Cornish people around. He laughed at the palpable lies of the press, bitterly. And because of his isolation and his absolute separateness, he was marked out as a spy.

"I am not a spy," he said, "I leave it to dirtier people. I am myself, and I won't have popular lies."

So, there began the visits of the policeman. A

large, blue, helmeted figure at the door.

"Excuse me, sir, I have just a few enquiries to make."

The police-sergeant always a decent, kindly fellow, driven by the military.

Somers and Harriet lived now with that suspense about them in the very air they breathed. They were suspects.

"Then let them suspect," said he. "I do nothing to them, so what can they do to me."

He still believed in the constitutional liberty of an Englishman.

"You know," said Harriet, "you *do* say things to these Cornish people."

"I only say, when they tell me newspaper lies, that they are lies."

But now the two began to be hated, hated far more than they knew.

"You want to be careful," warned one of the Cornish friends. "I've heard that the coast-watchers have got orders to keep very strict watch on you."

"Let them, they'll see nothing."

But it was not till afterwards that he learned that the watchers had lain behind the stone fence, to hear what he and Harriet talked about.

So, he was called up the first time and went. He was summoned to Penzance, and drove over with Harriet, expecting to return for the time at least. But he was ordered to proceed the same afternoon to Bodmin, along with sixteen or seventeen other fellows, farm hands and working men. He said good-bye to Harriet, who was to be driven back alone across the moors, to their lonely cottage on the other side.

"I shall be back to-morrow," he said.

England was still England, and he was not finally afraid.

The train-journey from Penzance to Bodmin with the other men: the fat braggard: the tall man who felt as Somers did: the change at the roadside station with the porters chaffing the men that the handcuffs were on them. Indeed, it was like being one of a gang of convicts. The great, prison-like barracks — the disgusting evening meal of which he could eat nothing — the little terrier-like sergeant of the regulars, who made them a little encouraging speech: not a bad chap. The lounging about that barracks yard, prisoners, till bed time: the other men crowding to the canteen, himself mostly alone. The brief talks with men who were for a moment curious as

to who and what he was. For a moment only. They were most of them miserable and bitter.

Gaol! It was like gaol. He thought of Oscar Wilde in prison. Night, and the beds to be made.

"They're good beds, clean beds, you'll sleep quite comfortable in them," said the elderly little sergeant with a white moustache. Nine o'clock lights out. Somers brought no night clothes, nothing. He slept in his woollen pants, and was ashamed because they had patches on the knees, for he and Harriet were very poor these years. In the next bed was a youth, a queer fellow, in a sloppy suit of black broad-cloth, and down-at-heel boots. He had a degenerate sort of handsomeness too. He had never spoken a word. His face was long and rather fine, his straight black hair came in a lock over his forehead. And there was an Apache sort of sheepishness, stupidity, in everything he did. He was a long time getting undressed. Then there he stood, and his white cotton day-shirt was long below his knees, like a woman's nightgown. A restless, bitter night, with one man cough, cough, coughing, a hysterical cough, and others' talking, making noises in their sleep. Bugle at six, and a scramble to wash themselves at the zinc trough in the wash house. Somers

could not crowd in, did not get in till towards the end. Then he had to borrow soap, and afterwards a piece of comb. The men were all quiet and entirely inoffensive, common, but gentle, by nature decent. A sickening breakfast, then wash-up and and sweep the floors. Somers took one of the heavy brooms, as ordered, and began. He swept his own floors nearly every day. But this was heavier work. The sergeant stopped him. "Don't you do that. You go and help to wipe the pots, if you like. Here, you boy, *you* — take that sweeping brush."

And Somers relinquished his broom to a bigger man.

They were kindly, and, in the essential sense, gentlemen, the little terrier of a sergeant too. Englishmen, his own people.

When it came to Somers' turn to be examined, and he took off his clothes and sat in his shirt in the cold lobby: the fat fellow pointed to his thin, delicate legs with a jeer. But Somers looked at him and he was quiet again. The queer, soft, pale-bodied fellow, against Somers' thin delicate whiteness. The little sergeant kept saying:

"Don't you catch cold, you chaps."

In the warm room behind a screen, Richard took

off his shirt and was examined. The doctor asked him where he lived — where was his home — asked as a gentleman asks, treated him with that gentle consideration Somers usually met with, save from business people or official people.

"We shall reject you, leave you free," said the doctor, after consulting with the more elderly, officious little man, "but we leave it to you to do what you can for your country."

"Thank you," said Richard, looking at him.

"Every man must do what he can," put in the other doctor, who was elderly and officious, but a gentleman. "The country needs the help of every man, and though we leave you free, we expect you to apply yourself to *some* service."

"Yes," said Somers, looking at him, and speaking in an absolutely neutral voice. Things said like that to him were never real to him : more like the noise of a cart passing, just a noise.

The two doctors looked from his face down his thin nakedness again.

"Put your shirt on," said the younger one.

And Somers could hear the mental comment, "Rum sort of fellow," as he did so.

There was still a wait for the card. It was one

of those cards : *A* – Called up for military service. *B* – Called up for service at the front, but not in the lines. *C* – Called up for non-military service. *R* – Rejected. *A*, *B*, and *C* were ruled out in red ink, leaving the Rejected. He still had to go to another office for his pay – two shillings and fourpence, or something like that. He signed for this and was free. Free – with two shillings and fourpence, and a pass for a railway ticket – and God's air. The moment he stepped out with his card, he realized that it was Saturday morning, that the sun was shining, filling the big stone yard of the barracks, from which he could look to the station and the hill with its grass, beyond. That hill beyond – he had seemed to look at it through darkened glass, before. Till now, the morning had been a timeless greyness. Indeed, it had rained at seven o'clock, as they stood lounging miserably about in the barracks yard with its high wall, cold and bitter. And the tall man had talked to him bitterly.

But now the sun shone, the dark-green, Cornish hill, hard-looking, was just a near hill. He walked through the great gates. Ah God, he was out, he was free. The road with trees went down-hill to the town. He hastened down, a free human being,

on Saturday morning, the grey glaze gone from his eyes.

He telegraphed the ignominious word *Rejected*, and the time of his arrival, to Harriet. Then he went and had dinner. Some of the other men came in. They were reserved now—there was a distance between him and them—he was not of their social class.

"What are you?" they asked him.

"*Rejected*," he said.

And they looked at him grudgingly, thinking it was because he was not a working man he had got special favour. He knew what they thought, and he tried not to look so glad. But glad he was, and in some mysterious way, triumphant.

It was a wonderful journey on the Saturday afternoon home—sunny, busy, lovely. He changed at Truro and went into town. On the road he met some of the other fellows, who were called up, but not summoned for service immediately. They had weeks, or months, of torment and suspense before them. They looked at Somers, and grinned rather jeeringly at him. They envied him—no wonder. And already he was a stranger, in another walk of life.

Rejected as unfit. One of the unfit. What did he care? The Cornish are always horrified of any ailment or physical disablement. "What's amiss then?" they would ask. They would *say* that you might as well be shot outright as labelled unfit. But most of them tried hard to find some constitutional weakness in themselves, that would get them rejected also, notwithstanding. And at the same time they felt they must be horribly ashamed of their physical ignominy if they were *labelled* unfit.

Somers did not care. Let them label me unfit, he said to himself. I know my own body is fragile, in its way, but also it is very strong, and it's the only body that would carry my particular self. Let the fools peer at it and put me down undeveloped chest and what they like, so long as they leave me to my own way.

Then the kindly doctor's exhortation that he should find some way for himself of serving his country. He thought about that many times. But always, as he came near to the fact of committing himself, he knew that he simply could not commit himself to any service whatsoever. In no shape or form could he serve the war, either indirectly or directly. Yet it would have been so easy. He had

quite enough influential friends in London to put him into some job, even some quite congenial, literary job, with a sufficient salary. They would be only too glad to do it, for there in his remoteness, writing occasionally an essay that only bothered them, he was a thorn in their flesh. And men and women with sons, brothers, husbands away fighting, it was small pleasure for them to read Mr. Somers and his pronounciation. "This trench and machine warfare is a blasphemy against life itself, a blasphemy which we are all committing." All very well, they said, but we are in for a war, and what are we to do? We hate it as much as he does. But we can't all sit safely in Cornwall.

That was true too, and he knew it, and he felt the most dreary misery, knowing how many brave, generous men were being put through this slaughter-machine of human devilishness. They were doing their best, and there was nothing else to do. But even that was no reason why he should go and do likewise.

If men had kept their souls firm and integral through the years, the war would never have come on. If, in the beginning, there had been enough strong, proud souls in England to concentrate the

English feeling into stern, fierce, honourable fighting, the war would never have gone as it went. But England slopped and wobbled, and the tide of horror accumulated.

And now, if circumstances had roped nearly all men into the horror, and it was a case of adding horror to horror, or dying well, on the other hand, the irremediable circumstance of his own separate soul made Richard Lovat's inevitable standing out. If there is outward, circumstantial unreason and fatality, there is inward unreason and inward fate. He would have to dare to follow his inward fate. He must remain alone, outside of everything, everything, conscious of what was going on, conscious of what he was doing and not doing. Conscious he must be, and consciously he must stick to it. To be forced into nothing.

For, above all things, man is a land animal and a thought-adventurer. Once the human consciousness really sinks and is swamped under the tide of events — as the best English consciousness was swamped, pacifist and patriotic alike — then the adventure is doomed. The English soul went under in the war, and, as a conscious, proud, adventurous, self-responsible soul, it was lost. We all lost the war:

Germany perhaps least. The adventure is always lost when the human conscious soul gives way under the stress, fails to keep control, and is submerged. Then out swarm the rats and the Bottomleys and crew, and the ship of human adventure is a horrible piratic affair, a dirty sort of freebooting.

Richard Lovat had nothing to hang on to but his own soul. So he hung on to it, and tried to keep his wits. If no man was with him, he was hardly aware of it, he had to grip on so desperately, like a man on a plank in a shipwreck. The plank was his own individual self.

Followed that period of suspense which changed his life forever. If the postman was coming plunging downhill through the bushes over the moor, the first thought was: What is he bringing now? The postman was over military age, and had a chuckle of pleasure in handing out those accursed *On His Majesty's Service* envelopes which meant that a man was summoned for torture. The postman was a Wesleyan and a chapel preacher, and the thought of hell for other men was sweet in him: he had a religious zest added to his natural Cornish zest in other people's disasters.

Again, if there was the glint of a bicycle on the

moor road, and if it turned down the bypath toward the cottage, then Somers strained his eyes to see if the rider were fat and blue, or tall and blue. Was it the police sergeant, or the police constable, coming for more identification proofs.

"We want your birth certificate," said the sergeant. "They've written from Bodmin asking you to produce your birth certificate."

"Then tell them to get it. No, I haven't got it. You've had my marriage certificate. You know who I am and where I was born and all the rest. Now let them get the birth certificate themselves."

Richard Lovat was at the end of all patience. They persisted he was a foreigner—poor Somers, just because he had a beard. One of the most intensely English little men England ever produced, with a passion for his country, even if it were often a passion of hatred. But no, they persisted he was a foreigner. Pah!

He and Harriet did all their own work, their own shopping. One wintry afternoon they were coming home with a knapsack, along the field path above the sea, when two khaki individuals, officers of some sort, strode after them.

"Excuse me," said one, in a damnatory officious

voice. "What have you got in that sack?"

"A few groceries," said Lovat.

"I would like to look."

Somers put the sack down on the path. The tall and lofty officer stooped and groped nobly among a pound of rice and a piece of soap and a dozen candles.

"Ha!" he cried, exultant. "What's this? A camera!"

Richard peeped in the bag at the groping red military hands. For a moment he almost believed that a camera had spirited itself in among his few goods, the implication of his guilt was so powerful. He saw a block in brown paper.

"A penn'orth of salt," he said quietly, though pale to the lips with anger and insult.

But the gentlemanly officer — a Captain — tore open the paper. Yes, a common block of salt. He pushed the bag aside.

"We have to be careful," said the other, lesser man.

"Of course," said Richard, tying up his bag.

"Good afternoon!" said Harriet.

The fellows half saluted, and turned hastening away. Richard and Harriet had the advantage of sauntering behind them and looking at their noble

backs. Oh, they were gentlemen, true English gentlemen: perhaps Cornish.

Harriet gave a pouf of laughter.

"The poor innocent salt!" she exclaimed.

And no doubt that was also chalked up against her.

It was Christmas time, and two friends came down to stay at the cottage with the Somers. Those were the days before America joined the Allies. The man friend arrived with a whole parcel of American dainties, buckwheat meal and sweet potatoes and maple sugar: the woman friend brought a good basket of fruit. They were to have a Christmas in the lonely cottage in spite of everything.

It was Christmas Eve, and a pouring black wet night outside. Nowhere can it be so black as on the edge of a Cornish moor, above the western sea, near the rocks where the ancient worshippers used to sacrifice. The darkness of menhirs. The American woman friend was crouching at the fire making fudge, the man was away in his room, when a thundering knock came at the door. Ah Lord!

The burly police-sergeant, and his bicycle.

"Sorry to trouble you sir, but is an American, a Mr. Monsell, stopping here with you? He is. Can I have a word with him?"

"Yes. Won't you come in?"

Into the cosy cottage room, with the American girl at the fire, her face flushed with fudge-making, entered the big, burly ruddy police-sergeant, his black mackintosh-cape streaming wet.

"We give you a terrible lot of trouble, I'm sorry to say," said Harriet ironically. "What an awful night for you to have to come all these miles. I'm sure it isn't *our* doing."

"No, ma'm, I know that. It's the doing of people who like to meddle. These military orders, they take some keeping pace with."

"I'm sure they do."

Harriet was all sympathy. So he, too, was goaded by these military canaille.

Somers fetched the American friend, and he was asked to produce papers, and give information. He gave it, being an honourable citizen and a well-bred American, with complete *sang froid*. At that moment Somers would have given a lot to be American too, and not English. But wait — those were early days, when America was still being jeered at for standing out and filling her pockets. She was not yet the intensely loved Ally. The police-sergeant was pleasant as ever. He apologized again, and went out into

the black and pouring night. So much for Christmas Eve.

"But that's not the end of the horrid affair," as the song says. When Monsell got back to London he was arrested, and conveyed to Scotland Yard: there examined, stripped naked, his clothes taken away. Then he was kept for a night in a cell — next evening liberated and advised to return to America.

Poor Monsell, and he was so very anti-German, so very pro-British. It was a blow for him. He did not leave off being anti-German, but he was much less pro-British. And after all, it was war-time, when these things must happen, we are told. Such a war-time that let loose the foulest feelings of a mob, particularly of "gentlemen," to torture any single, independent man as a mob always tortures the isolated and independent.

In despair, Somers thought he would go to America. He had passports, he was Rejected. They had no use for him, and he had no use for them. So he posted his passports to the Foreign Office, for the military permit to depart.

It was January, and there was a thin film of half-melted snow, like silver, on the fields and the path. A white, static, arrested morning, away there

in the west of Cornwall, with the moors looking primeval, and the huge granite boulders bulging out of the earth like presences. So easy to realise men worshipping stones. It is not the stone. It is the mystery of the powerful, pre-human earth, showing its might. And all, this morning, static, arrested in a cold, milky whiteness, like death, the west lost in the sea.

A man culminates in intense moments. This was one of Somers' white, deathlike moments, as he walked home from the tiny post-office in the hamlet, on the wintry morning, after he had posted his passports asking for visas to go to New York. It was like walking in death: a strange, arrested land of death. Never had he known that feeling before: as if he were a ghost in the after-death, walking a strange, pale, static, cold world. It almost frightened him. "Have I done wrong?" he asked himself. "Am I wrong, to leave my country and go to America?"

It was then as if he *had* left his country: and that was like death, a still, static, corporate death. America was the death of his own country in him, he realised that.

But he need not have bothered. The Foreign Office kept his passports, and did not so much as

answer him. He waited in vain.

Spring came — and one morning the news that Asquith was out of the government, that Lloyd George was in. And this was another of Somers' crises. He felt he must go away from the house, away from everywhere. And as he walked, clear as a voice out of the moors, came a voice saying: "It is the end of England. It is the end of old England. It is finished. England will never be England any more."

Cornwall is a country that makes a man psychic. The longer he stayed, the more intensely it had that effect on Somers. It was as if he were developing second sight, and second hearing. He would go out into the blackness of night and listen to the blackness, and call, call softly, for the spirits, the presences he felt coming downhill from the moors in the night. "Tuatha De Danaan!" he would call softly. "Tuatha De Danaan! Be with me. Be with me." And it was as if he felt them come.

And so this morning the voice struck into his consciousness. "It is the end of England." So he walked along blindly, up the valley and on the moors. He loved the country intensely. It seemed to answer him. But his consciousness was all con-

fused. In his mind, he did not at all see why it should be the end of England. Mr. Asquith was called Old Wait-and-See. And truly, English Liberalism had proved a slobbery affair, all sad sympathy with everybody, and no iron backbone, these years. Repulsively humble, too, on its own account. It was no time for Christian humility. And yet, it was true to its great creed.

Whereas Lloyd George! Somers knew nothing about Lloyd George. A little Welsh lawyer, not an Englishman at all. He had no real significance in Richard Lovat's soul. Only, Somers gradually came to believe that all Celts, even whilst they espoused the cause of England, subtly lived to bring about the last humiliation of the great old England. They could never do so if England *would not be* humiliated. But with an England fairly offering herself to ignominy, where was the help? Let the Celts work out their subtlety. If England *wanted* to be betrayed, in the deeper issues. Perhaps Jesus wanted to be betrayed. He did. He chose Judas.

Well, the story could have no other ending.

The war-wave had broken right over England, now: right over Cornwall. Probably throughout the ages Cornwall had not been finally swept, submerged

by any English spirit. Now it had happened – the accursed later war spirit. Now the tales began to go round full-tilt against Somers. A chimney of his house was tarred to keep out the damp: that was a signal to the Germans. He and his wife carried food to supply German submarines. They had secret stores of petrol in the cliff. They were watched and listened to, spied on, by men lying behind the low stone fences. It is a job the Cornish loved. They didn't even mind being caught at it: lying behind a fence with field-glasses, watching through a hole in the drystone wall a man with a lass, on the edge of the moors. Perhaps they were proud of it. If a man wanted to hear what was said about him – or anything – he lay behind a wall at the field-corners, where the youths talked before they parted and went indoors, late of a Saturday night. A whole intense spying life going on all the time.

Harriet could not hang out a towel on a bush, or carry out the slops, in the empty landscape of moors and sea, without her every movement being followed by invisible eyes. And at evening, when the doors were shut, valiant men lay under the windows to listen to the conversation in the cosy little room. And bitter enough were the things they said: and

damnatory, the two Somers. Richard did not hold himself in. And he talked too with the men on the farm: openly. For they had exactly the same anti-military feeling as himself, and they simply loathed the thought of being compelled to serve. Most men in the west, Somers thought, would have committed murder to escape, if murder would have helped them. It wouldn't. He loved the people at the farm, and the men kindled their rage together. And again Somers' farmer friend warned him, how he was being watched. But Somers *would* not heed. "What can they do to me!" he said. "I am not a spy in any way whatsoever. There is nothing they can do to me. I make no public appearance at all. I am just by myself. What can they do to me? Let them go to hell."

He refused to be watchful, guarded, furtive, like the people around, saying double things as occasion arose, and hiding their secret thoughts and secret malignancy. He still believed in the freedom of the individual. — Yes, freedom of the individual!

He was aware of the mass of secret feeling against him. Yet the people he came into daily contact with liked him — almost loved him. So he kept on defying the rest, and went along blithe and open as

ever, saying what he really felt, or holding his tongue. Enemies! How could he have any *personal* enemies? He had never done harm to any of these people, he had never even felt any harm. He did not believe in personal enemies. It was just the military.

Enemies he had, however, people he didn't know and hadn't even spoken to. Enemies who hated him like poison. They hated him because he was free, because of his different, unafraid face. They hated him because he wasn't cowed, as they were all cowed. They hated him for his intimacy at the farm, in the hamlet. For each farm was bitter jealous of each other.

Yet he never believed he had any *personal* enemies. And he had all the west hating him like poison. He realised once, when two men came down the moorland by-road — officers in khaki — on a motor-bicycle, and went trying the door of the next cottage, which was shut up. Somers went to the door, in all simplicity.

"Did you want me?" he asked.

"No, we didn't want *you*," replied one of the fellows, in a genteel voice and a tone like a slap in the face. Somers spoken to as if he were the lowest

of the low. He shut his cottage door. Was it so? Had they wilfully spoken to him like that? He would not believe it.

But inwardly, he knew it was so. That was what intended to convey to him: that he was the lowest of the low. He began even to feel guilty, under this mass of poisonous condemnation. And he realised that they had come, on their own, to get into the other cottage and see if there were some wireless installation or something else criminal. But it was fastened tight, and apparently they gave up their design of breaking in, for they turned the motor-cycle and went away.

Day followed day in this tension of suspense. Submarines were off the coast; Harriet saw a ship sunk, away to sea. Horrible excitement, and the postman asking sly questions to try to catch Somers out. Increased rigour of coast watching, and *no* light must be shown. Yet along the high-road on the hillside above, plainer than any house-light, danced the lights of a cart, moving, or slowly sped the light of a bicycle, on the blackness. Then a Spanish coal-vessel, three thousand tons, ran on the rocks in a fog, straight under the cottage. She was completely wrecked. Somers watched the waves

break over her. Her coal washed ashore, and the farmers carried it up the cliffs in sacks.

There was to be a calling-up now and a re-examination of every man — Somers felt the crisis approaching. The ordeal was to go through, once more. The first rejection meant nothing. There were certain reservations. He had himself examined again by a doctor. The strain told on his heart as well as his breathing. He sent in this note to the authorities. A reply: "You must present yourself for examination, as ordered."

He knew that if he was ever really summoned to any service, and finally violated, he would be broken, and die. But patience. In the meanwhile he went to see his people: the long journey up the west, changing at Plymouth and Bristol and Birmingham, up to Derby. Glamorous west of England: if a man were free. He sat through the whole day, very still, looking at the world. Very still, gone very far inside himself, travelling through this England in spring. He loved it so much. But it was in the grip of something monstrous, not English, and he was almost gripped too. As it was, by making himself far away inside himself, he contained himself, and was still.

He arrived late in Derby: Saturday night, and no train for the next ten miles. But luckily, there was a motor-bus going out to the outlying villages. Derby was very dark, like a savage town, a feeling of savagery. And at last the 'bus was ready: full of young miners, more or less intoxicated. The 'bus was crammed, a solid jam of men, sitting on each other's knees, standing blocked and wedged. There was no outside accomodation. And inside were jammed eighteen more men than was allowed. It was like being pressed into one block of corned beef.

The 'bus ran six miles without stopping, through an absolutely dark country, Zepplin black, and having one feeble light of its own. The roads were unmended, and very bad. But the 'bus charged on, at full speed, like a dim consciousness madly charging through the night. And the mass of colliers swayed with the 'bus, intoxicated into a living block, and with high, loud, wailing voices they sang:

*«There's a long, long trail a-winding
Into the land of my dreams —
Where the nightingales are singing and the —»*

This ghastly trailing song, like death itself. The colliers seemed to tear it out of their bowels, in a

long, wild chant. They, too, all loathed the war: loathed it. And this awful song! They subsided, and somebody started "Tipperary."

*«It's a long, long way to Tipperary,
It's a long way to go — »*

But Tipperary was already felt as something of a Jonah: a bad-luck song, so it did not last long. The miserable songs — with their long, long ways that ended in sheer lugubriousness: real death-wails! These for battle songs. The wail of a dying humanity.

Somebody started:

*«Good-bye — eee
Don't cry — eee
Wipe the tear, baby dear, from your eye — eee —
For it's hard to part I know.
I'll — be — tickled-to-death to go,
Good-bye — eeee
Don't cry — eee — »*

But the others didn't know this ragtime, and they weren't yet in the mood. They drifted drunkenly back to the ineffable howl of:

«There's a long, long trail — »

A black, wild Saturday night. These were the collier youths Somers has been to school with — approximately. As they tore their bowels with their

singing, they tore his. But as he sat squashed far back among all that coated flesh, in the dimmest glim of a light, that only made darkness more substantial, he felt like some strange isolated cell in some tensely packed organism that was hurling through chaos into oblivion. The colliers. He was more at one with them. But they were blind, ventral. Once they broke loose heaven knows what it would be.

The Midlands — the theatre in Nottingham — the pretense of amusement, and the feeling of murder in the dark, dreadful city. In the daytime these songs — this horrible long trail, and "Good-byeeee" and "Way down in Tennessee." They tried to keep up their spirits with this rag-time Tennessee. But there was murder in the air in the Midlands, among the colliers. In the theatre particularly, a shut-in, awful feeling of souls fit for murder.

London — mid-war London, nothing but war, war. Lovely sunny weather, and bombs at midday in the Strand. Summery weather. Berkshire — aeroplanes — springtime. He was as if blind; he must hurry the long journey back to Harriet and Cornwall.

Yes — he had his papers — he must present him-

self again at Bodmin barracks. He was just simply summoned as if he were already conscripted. But he knew he must be medically examined. He went — left home at seven in the morning to catch the train. Harriet watched him go across the field. She was left alone, in a strange country.

"I shall be back to-night," he said.

It was a still morning, remote, as if one were not in the world. On the hill down to the station he lingered. "Shall I not go! Shall I not go!" he said to himself. He wanted to break away. But what good? He would only be arrested and lost. Yet he had dawdled his time, he had to run hard to catch the train in the end.

This time things went much more quickly. He was only two hours in the barracks. He was examined. He could tell they knew about him and disliked him. He was put into class C 3 — unfit for military service, but conscripted for light non-military duties. There were no rejections now. Still, it was good enough. There were thousands of C men, so they were not very likely to fetch him up. He would only be a nuisance anyhow. That was clear all round.

Through the little window at the back of their

ancient granite cottage, Harriet, peeping wistfully out to sea — poor Harriet, she was always frightened now — saw Richard coming across the fields, home, walking fast, and with that intent look about him that she half feared. She ran out in a sort of fear, then waited. She would wait.

He saw her face very bright with fear and joy at seeing him back: very beautiful in his eyes. The only real thing, perhaps, left in his world.

"Here you are! So early!" she cried. "I didn't expect you. The dinner isn't ready yet. Well?"

"C 3," he replied. "It's all right."

"I *knew* it would be," she cried, seizing his arm and hugging it to her. They went in to the cottage to finish cooking the evening meal. And immediately one of the farm girls came running up to see what it was.

"Oh, C 3 — so you're all right, Mr. Somers. Glad, I'm glad."

Harriet never forgot the straight, intent bee-line for home which he was making when she peeped out of that little window unaware.

So, another respite. They were not going to touch him. They knew he would be a firebrand in their army, a dangerous man to put with any group of

men. They would leave him alone. C 3.

He had almost entirely left off writing now, and spent most of his days working on the farm. Again the neighbors were jealous.

"Buryan gets his labor cheap. He'd never have got his hay in but for Mr. Somers," they said. And that was another reason for wishing to remove Richard Lovat. Work went like steam when he was on the Trendrinnan farm, and he was too thick with the Buryans. Much too thick. And John Thomas Buryan rather bragged of Mr. Somers at market, and how he, Richard Lovat, wasn't afraid of any of them, etc., etc. — that he wasn't going to serve anybody, etc. — and that nobody could make him — etc., etc.

But Richard drifted away this summer, on to the land, into the weather, into Cornwall. He worked out of doors all the time — he ceased to care inwardly — he began to drift away from himself. He was very thick with John Thomas, and nearly always at the farm. Harriet was a great deal alone. And he seemed to be drifting away, drifting back to the common people, becoming a working man, of the lower classes. It had its charm for Harriet, this aspect of him — careless, rather reckless, in old

clothes and an old battered hat. He kept his sharp wits, but his *spirit* became careless, lost its concentration.

"I declare!" said John Thomas, as Somers appeared in the cornfield, "you look more like one of us every day." And he looked with a bright Cornish eye at Somers' careless, belted figure and old jacket. The speech struck Richard: it sounded half triumphant, half mocking. "He thinks I'm coming down in the world — it is half a rebuke," thought Somers to himself. But he was half pleased: and half he *was* rebuked.

Corn harvest lasted long, and was a happy time for them all. It went well, well. Also from London occasionally a young man came down and stayed at the inn in the church town, some young friend of Somers who hated the army and the Government and was generally discontented, and so fitfully came as an adherent to Richard Lovat. One of these was James Sharpe, a young Edinburgh man with a moderate income of his own, interested in music. Sharpe was hardly more than a lad — but he was the type of lowland Scotsman who is half an artist, not more, and so can never get on in the ordinary respectable life, rebels against it all the time, and

yet can never get away from it or free himself from its dictates.

Sharpe had taken a house further along the coast, brought his piano down from London and sufficient furniture and a housekeeper, and insisted, like a morose bird, that he wanted to be alone. But he wasn't really morose and he didn't want really to be alone. His old house, rather ramshackle, stood back a little way from the cliffs, where the moor came down savagely to the sea, past a deserted tin mine. It was lonely, wild, and in a savage way, poetic enough. Here Sharpe installed himself for the moment: to be alone with his music and his general discontent.

Of course he excited the wildest comments. He had window-curtains of different colours, so of course, *here* was plain signalling to the German submarines. Spies, the lot of them. When still another young man of the same set came and took a bungalow on the moors, West Cornwall decided that it was being delivered straight into German hands. Not that West Cornwall would have minded that so terribly. No; it wasn't that it feared the Germans. It was that it hated the sight of these recalcitrant young men. And Somers the instigator,

the arch-spy, the responsible little swine with his beard.

Somers, meanwhile, began to chuckle a bit to himself. After all he was getting the better of the military *canaille*. *Canaille ! Canaglia ! Schweinerei !* He loathed them in all the languages he could lay his tongue to.

So Somers and Harriet went to stay a week-end with Sharpe at Trevanna, as the house was called. Sharpe was a C 2 man, on perpetual tenterhooks. He had decided that if ever *he* were summoned to serve, he would just disappear. The Somers drove over, only three or four miles, on the Saturday afternoon, and the three wandered on the moor and down the cliff. No one was in sight. But how many pairs of eyes were watching, who knows? Sharpe lighting a cigarette for Harriet was an indication of untold immorality.

Evening came, the lamps were lit, and the incriminating curtains carefully drawn. The three sat before the fire in the long music room, and tried to be cosy and jolly. But there was something wrong with the mood. After dinner it was even worse. Harriet curled herself up on the sofa with a cigarette, Sharpe spread himself in profound melancholy

in his big chair, Somers sat back, nearer the window. They talked in occasional snatches, in mockery of the enemy that surrounded them. Then Somers sang to himself, in an irritating way, one German folksong after another, not in a songful, but in a defiant way.

«*Annchen von Tharau*» — «*Schatz, mein Schatz, reite nicht so weit von mir.*» «*Zu Strasburg auf der Schanz, da fiel mein Ungluck ein.*» This went on till Sharpe asked him to stop.

And in the silence, the tense and irritable silence that followed, came a loud bang. All got up in alarm, and followed Sharpe through the dining-room to the small entrance-room, where a dim light was burning. A lieutenant and three sordid men in the dark behind him, one with a lantern.

[*To be continued in the next issue.*]

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“No man is an *Iland*, entire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the *Continent*, a part of the *maine*; if a *Clod* bee washed away by the *Sea*, *Europe* is the lesse, as well as if a *Promontorie* were, as well as if a *Mannor* of thy friends or of *thine owne* were; any man’s *death* diminishes *me*, because I am involved in *Mankinde*; And therefore never send to know for whom the *bell* tolls; It tolls for *thee*.”

John Donne



THE CLIMB TO VERDUN *

BY

Jean Giono

(Translated from the French by Ned C. Fabs)



OUNGSTER, come here, it's sheltered. Take off your pack; there's a notch in the wall; you can rest."

Marroi pulled gently at Olivier's shoulder. They are in a corner of a doorway, under the eaves.

It is perhaps midnight or one o'clock. It is raining. Their shoulders are drenched, rain streams from their helmets. They have been there since sundown, lined up in that village street. From all directions, men have poured into that street. Some came down from the hills, from the cantonments of the fourth; some came across the fields from the farms where the eighth was stationed. The latter

* From the book *Refusal to Obey*. A preceding portion appeared in the *Spring* issue of *The Phoenix*.

did not stop at the village. They were marching by in the mud just as the night began; since then they can be heard outside the walls up above, in the fields. The captain's horse is dancing with its rump against the lantern. It is pushing its large hind quarters toward the light which frightens it and its tail is splashing rain. The village is filling up, swarming in the night, and the little streets and dirt roads are over-flowing, everywhere. The houses are completely lost in the men. They have come out of their quarters everywhere; all is empty now. There remains only the carcass of the walls and when one kicks against a stable-door, it resounds hollow like a bass drum.

"What are we waiting for?" asks Olivier.

"Horse-face."

"Who?"

"The colonel."

Ten buglers pass in the light of the lantern. The brass of the trumpets glistens.

On the new trail a squad from the sixth is splashing into the spring and shouting among the staves which have been torn loose.

On the other side of the houses, in another street which joins the road up above, a long and heavy

troop is heard marching in the mud. Then the cars rattling like loads of scrap-iron.

Up ahead, a field-kitchen like a huge pile of embers goes by and the rain crackles on its hot plating.

"By fours, there, by fours."

Olivier grabs his pack. Immediately he is stifled by the rain as though it were a bunch of water-plants. At arm's length he touches Marroi's pack. He follows.

"By fours . . ."

The lantern has been removed. A fat man bouncing in the saddle against the heavy trot of a horse goes by. The sheath of his sabre gets caught in the rifles.

"What's this? Who's commanding here? What company? Line up."

They hear him beating the packs with a whip.

Olivier's left hand touches a tarpaulin haversack. It is Doche. Slipping in the mud, he has bumped against 'Chicken' on the right; ahead of him is Marroi.

They march, then they stop. They march.

"Doche, y'got the time?"

"Yes, but in my jacket."

"We're heading back for trouble," says Marroi.

"We can still turn, goose-face," says 'Chicken', who is still in love with Alsace.

"We can still light up, corporal?" asks Vernet, from behind.

"Bonehead . . . ", replies Doche simply.

Vernet strikes a light and they smell the burnt punk.

They have just gone beyond the houses. And suddenly the village has melted into the night and the rain. There never has been one. They thought they had stopped to rest in the straw; they have kept on marching and kept on marching in the rain. No matter. They stopped again once or twice to feel their way.

"Get going, up there."

"Pass the word to watch out for the staves."

Look, we're going up along the new trail. A lot of good it did to have the others come down a little while ago. Where are we going, then, in this direction? It wouldn't be, then . . . more likely it's . . . no, on this side we're not directly opposite the cannonade; we must be a little to the right.

No, the village, for sure, it's completely gone, wiped out absolutely. And it's hard climbing, there,

and it's slippery, and, there you are, water in your neck . . . It's cold against the skin of your back. By shoving up your pack with a good jerk . . . the cover falls against your helmet and shoves it over your eyes. Shit . . . my gun almost . . .

"Keep your gun to yourself," says 'Chicken.'

There. It's more solid walking in the grass. It seems as though you're two hundred pounds lighter. That's better. No, the village . . . It hardly seems possible that everything should melt away like that, in the world.

Olivier thinks suddenly, in a lightning flash, of the sunshine, of the plateau, of the almond trees with the blossoms. Exactly like a lightning flash because it made his head all yellow inside, so that he thought there were lights ahead. No, there is nothing in the night, in the rain, but that enormous beast of a herd splashing in the mud, which twists up ahead, and strings out behind to who knows where? . . . He doesn't even know now that he has just thought of the almond-blossoms.

At the top of the hill there is a little level ground which makes the walking easier, and then they enter a wood. The whole troop tramples in the mould of the soft leaves and bumps against the trees. Then

at last they have a hard road; there is no mud, or almost none, only water. They splash into it. They are on the crest. The column lengthens a little. There are others still up there in the wood. Perhaps there are still some in the village, on the other side of the hill; there's no way to know. It seems as though the night is full of them, of these men who are marching.

They made a halt just when the road was turning down toward a narrow valley dug into the night. Below, a supply convoy. Always that convoy. That river of vans, of autos, of ammunition wagons. It goes along blindly in the depth of the night.

It's 'Chicken', all right, who is there in the line with Olivier, then another whom he doesn't recognize. In stacking arms, Olivier found out. It's Poiron.

"Everything all right, Poiron?"

"Yes," the other answers in a strangled voice. His hand is trembling. Olivier has to take his hand and hold it in order to put their rifles together.

"Everything all right, pal?"

"Yes, I'm all right. It's tough going in the rain. It's hard to push ahead with your thigh. I'll be all right, I've got hold of myself."

He doesn't even think to hold back on his pack

by the strap. He lets it fall with all its weight right into the mud.

Marroi is griping.

"Do you think that's intelligent, corporal? They're going to shove us right into that machinery down below. Oh, it's a lot of fun to go along the side of the road without counting the goo you get thrown in your mug by those assinine gunners."

The other growls.

"Oh, you don't know," says Marroi, "as for me, it's not for myself I say that. Me, I'm going to get myself kicked in the stomach by a horse, that's what I'm looking for, I've told you, I tell you once and for all, I'm damned sick of all that business up there. You'll see, I'm going to do everything I can to get kicked by a cow or rammed into by a car. And then after that, old boy, away from all this, my little Marroi he'll go have his toenails cleaned, yes, horse-face."

"Play the fool, play the fool," says Doche, "you'll win."

They have started again on the slope.

The great beast which is sliding on its belly down there in the trees gives out an odor of burnt gasoline and horses' farts. It shouts "Get up!" or it beats with its hoofs, or it bellows with the blow of a horn.

"You understand," says Marroi, up ahead in his place in line, but addressing Doche. "You understand, corporal . . . you're listening to me . . . it's not because of you I'm saying this. What are you, a poor dope, like me. But they had a clear road down there in the village. They couldn't take that empty one, wide open. No. What they want is not so much to make us march, it's to make us drool from it! It's to get us mad, right down to the dried up dirt in our noses."

"Can't you stop bursting our ear-drums, you big mug?" shouts a voice from behind.

They went down so that they almost touched the convoy, so that they felt its heat, sensed it cutting into the night like a sharp knife up ahead. But they got away from it by a turn which they didn't even notice. It stayed on one side, they on the other; they went into a wood; the noise of the transport has grown softer. In the wood there is a fire, way back there in the depths and they smell coffee. They smell horse manure too, but as for that, they smell horse manure everywhere. One is accustomed to that when one is from the country and it makes one think. But the manure here has the pungent odor of a sick animal. A horse coughs under the trees.

"If there was only a way to wipe off the snot," says Marroi.

From having removed their packs on the road, up there, their hands are full of mud and it has gotten onto the belts of their guns too. They seem to have it everywhere: on their coats, under their nails . . . A halt will never come.

It has stopped raining; they are sweating a thick sweat which steams around their necks, and then afterward, the wet collars stick to their necks and they shiver with cold; they feel their backbones shoving out against their skin.

Olivier hunches his shoulder a little to fasten his gun better, then he undoes his necktie. He puts it in a cartridge-pouch. He has to take out his handkerchief. He stopped a bit to hold out his thigh and find the opening to his pocket. The man behind him hit against his pack.

"Are you going to keep moving, you dope?"

There, that dry handkerchief around his neck, that's better. Although from having stayed like that without a tie his skin is all goose-pimpled with cold. Moving his neck he feels his skin stuck in the stuff from his nose. It's drying up, it's getting warm. He's more comfortable now. His shoulders are still

wet under his shirt, but that warm handkerchief around his neck, that feels good.

Suddenly, they had that big convoy up ahead again. That one or perhaps another. They can't tell. They can't tell any more. The whole night seems to roll its belly in gravel, like a river. They kept close to the convoy, perhaps a hundred yards away with times when they approached and other times they drew away, but just a little. And then again they got away from the beast, the blind beast, they took advantage of its having to wind tediously up a narrow valley which was filled with its noise and they began to climb the hill, slowly, very slowly with their knees seeming to be gripped in circles of ice and finally they halted again on the summit, in a sheltered place. Sheltered, but not sheltered from the little breeze of the dawn. They beat their arms like lashes about their bodies.

"Let's die and be done with it," says Marroi.

Olivier is thinking of Brinda who must be coughing down there among the men. And Camous, who knows if . . . ? And Poiron . . . ?

"Poiron ? Poiron ?"

"Yes," answers a voice heavily from the ground. Olivier leans over. Poiron is lying there in the

mud. Olivier feels him with his hand.

"Hey, old pal, old pal!"

Poiron is stretched out like a rag. His head is in the mud.

"Hey, old pal. So, it's got you? Got you down, pal? Want me to tell Doche, pal? You want a shot of brandy?"

"I'm all right, I'm all right," says Poiron. "I'm all right, there, don't say anything, I'll get over this. Give me the brandy."

He drinks and lies down again. He is panting heavily like a cornered animal.

"Lift your head out of the mud, pal!"

"Never mind. There, I'm all right."

It's soon over, the halt.

A blow on a whistle and Olivier gives Poiron a hand. And he lifts up a long light thing. But right away he has to leave him, there, swaying, in the night to run for his gun, his pack . . .

Now they follow waves of hills along their crest on a little road of soft earth, sticky, foul smelling as ripe cheese. They pant after each step. The troop lengthens, stretches out like a worm, then closes, then stretches out, and like that until they reach that hard road which they found suddenly under

their feet. A road which came there unexpectedly in the night, with its trees which they hear and its armor of stone.

And softly, very softly, a monotonous music; as if the brushwood had begun to beat a cadence on a drum of leaves, a rhythm is tying step to step. There are more than twenty of them there who, from instinct, march in step because that cadence helps, because thus one is no longer alone, they are twenty to bear their weight and their pain and, with twenty, it's lighter. And the cadence surges into the distance under the feet of the troop like a large rat running here and there under the feet, between the feet, to release them from that fatigue which shackles them as though with ropes of grass. It beats all along the road, in the detours, on the slopes, and in the hollows. It beats back there at the intersection of the dirt road and, as soon as the men set foot on the harder surface, they take up the step and the cadence, and suddenly they swing along, relieved of their burden and their fatigue.

They have all put their shoulders to the fatigue and they have lifted it together, and they carry it together: one-two, one-two, one-two, like a great tree-trunk now made lighter and whose branches

no longer drag on the ground.

The daylight comes green and pungent, like the oozing from a sore. They cross a main railway line, bare, dead. The crossing-gate has been ripped away. The little house is empty and it resounds like a metallic drum when they pass alongside. One window is plugged up with sacks. The other window has been broken in with a pick-axe. A trail of straw crosses the track and leads into the house. Hedges at the edge of the road come out of the fog, then an ash-tree, then the fields spread out. There is a village over there, to the left, with a little floating tuft of smoke.

Olivier looks for Poiron. He is not there. He is not several rows behind. He is not to be seen. His place is empty near Doche. At the halt, Olivier went to see. No Poiron.

They went through another little valley, and at the end they found the plain. Between the naked trees, drums of gasoline piled into a pyramid. In front of them, a man is smoking a pipe.

Marroi is not talking. He is walking with head lowered, lips hanging. He has just put a quid in his cheek. He is ruminating his quid like a horse biting on the bit.

'Chicken' is plodding along with his big legs. His pack is dancing on his shoulders. He has thrown everything away. He has nothing in there but a shirt. He has thrown away his biscuits. He has thrown away his cartridges. The chain of his mess tin is clinking on the iron.

A donkey-engine with a smoke-stack like a blunderbuss emerges from a cut; it is pulling a heavy train of cars full of shells over a meadow all gay with daisies.

On a road over there which goes along on its own, heavy trucks run one after another alongside a long serpent of ammunition-wagons which is filing by slowly to the walk of its horses.

Ah, there it is, that convoy. There it is. Or isn't it rather that black troop of men, horses and wagons which emerges, in the distance, in the depths of the forest, drags along in the fields and disappears under the flat rock of a village.

Anyway, the one or the other, we see it, it's no longer like a serpent which coiled along our route in the confusion of last night and which flipped its tail against our flank. It is made of man and beast, and of wheels and shoes like us. It goes along like us. It is going to pour itself into that great tub of

sky which was boiling in the depths of the night and which now is rumbling behind the hills.

Olivier continues to look for Poiron. For a moment he thought he saw the distraught mouth and the insane eyes of his friend appear from among the heads back there in the distance. No, he must find out :

"Corporal."

"Yes."

"Poiron?"

"Who's that?"

"The comrade, there, who was next to you."

"No."

They are marching. Doche doesn't seem to attach too much importance to that comrade whom the night has made disappear like that. He has simply drawn over a little to his left. He has made himself a little more comfortable in the empty place, that's all.

"Last night, up there, he lay down in the mud. He's not very hefty, so he was knocked out fast. He was on the ground, yes, stretched out, just like an animal. I gave him a little brandy for support. I asked him, 'Are you all right?' He told me, 'I'm all right.' He's a fellow who has a lot of guts. Well, I

don't know where he is now."

"What did you say his name is?"

"Poiron."

"He's just arrived? He came with you?"

"Yes."

"Good. All right, don't worry about him. I have him marked in my book."

* * * * *

There is rain again for a moment, about a hundred drops from a cloud which had fallen asleep and which now hasn't gotten up quickly enough; the sun has pierced it with a soft gray arrow. The miniature rain clatters on a pile of cartridge-cases.

"Pass the word: to the left, pull over to the left."

It's a truck coming. It is hauling a heavy gun. The gun is there, its muzzle plugged with green cloth; on its four thick squeaking wheels it shakes heavily. The road trembles. The column is marching in the ditch. The curved ditch, soft as a cradle, a bed . . .

"Corporal."

Olivier makes a bit of an effort to talk to Doche as he would to a close friend. He has a sort of in-

stinct which pushes him on to make the effort, to talk familiarly, to be nearer Doche for what he wants to say to him.

"If he's lying somewhere all alone . . . in pain perhaps . . . it was all crackling in here . . ." He touches his chest.

" . . . you couldn't send word . . . "

"Cut it. What do you mean? Send word to who?"

They continue marching on the road.

They marched like that. The daylight spread so as to be on everything and they marched, and the cadence of their step broke and all their fatigue returned; they found themselves alone again with the fatigue. They said:

"That village, this time, it's that village . . . "

They passed through the village; the long troop rubbed against the wall of the village; it checked itself as it rubbed against the walls, but in the distance, far in the field, the head of the troop pulls and drags everything. Fields again, woods, hills.

"Perhaps over there . . . "

A house which watches with one window, one-eyed between the trees. It's not a village. It's only a large farm. There is a forge in the middle of the open court. An artilleryman, naked to the waist is

struggling with a piece of white-hot iron which splashes sparks under his pounding hammer. Nearby, a heavy gun is waiting. It is covered with dry mud. A clod of earth still holding a flower of the fields has remained jammed between two spokes of its wheel.

They march.

Interminable waves of hill flow gently alongside the road. There was a long pause in a grassy field. They sat on their packs. They shared cheese and sardines. 'Chicken' has limped off with his canvas bucket. He has managed to exchange the heavy bottle which he was supposed to carry for a canvas bucket. It's lighter. He is going to the distribution of wine. They chew the paste of a camembert. It leaves a plaster on their lips and tongues. They cut the sardines on their bread. Olivier digs in his pockets. He has forgotten his handkerchief around his neck. He wipes his nose with his fingers, he dries his fingers on his trousers, then eats a mouthful of bread and sardine. The wine is cold, but it lights up all the heat of the bowels. All the bellies begin to take on life in the warmth. There is a little more spirit.

"That's what would do the job all right," says

Marroi, "a wheel of that gun on my foot."

Doche spits in the mud:

"You'll win, you'll see . . . "

* * * * *

Soon, on that endless road, their fatigue has returned. They are carrying their own, all alone, now, each for himself and it's heavy. They are not talking now, they are making their legs move. Olivier no longer thinks of Poiron. He is thinking that he will throw away everything he has in his sack like 'Chicken'. It can't be too far away, though, the stable. They are not going to be killed, on that road. They are not going to be slaughtered there. In the distance, far in the fields, the head of the herd is marching, touching the edge of the woods, sinking in; the body is following, sliding on the slope, the rest is sliding. They go on and on.

"They're over there. It's over there, I see Colum-
eau," said Marroi, as they approached a village.

No, it's not there, it wasn't Columbeau, at best a soldier who looked like him, and besides . . .

"Go off and hide, you dope," shouted Marroi as he went by.

They marched.

Finally it was the stables at last, suddenly, there, in the trees. Houses, barns, straw.

* * * * *

Already there is no more noise in the village. A lone man on a bicycle goes by with short pedal strokes in the street. He turns aside his wheel at each puddle, gently. His wheel whistles in the mud.

They have taken off their ammunition-belts and they are sleeping under the wet coats, under the clammy covers smeared with mud. Their large muddy shoes are there, empty, on the floor. They have not even closed the doors and the stables breathe into the street a heavy odor of sweat and warm filth.

At dawn : rise, and : fall in. Eyes are like empty holes in the heads. The heads have holes punched through in place of eyes and two strips of sky have been passed through as cords are passed through the skull of sheep to hang the carcasses in the butcher's shop.

All those somber landscapes, all those countryside of fatigue which they have chewed and rumin-

ated the days before, it has remained bitter in their mouths, bitter and green, and foul like the sap of a sick tree.

And the fatigue, all that blood which has soured like a good wine left in the sun, the fatigue is there, all burning in their joints, along their limbs, on their napes, like the evil weight of a rock.

Again the road, the long ribbon of mud and they have dragged themselves from the village.

As they are passing the last houses, there are two ambulance carriages of hard wood with iron wheels. A man who looks like Poiron is under the awning.

"Oh," cries Olivier raising his hand.

The man looked without answering.

They crossed a big camp for a provision convoy. All that slow water of convoys was coming there to coil into a whirlpool, was sleeping there and boiling slowly with noises of harness and clinking iron. It smells of horse-hide and churned up earth.

And now too, guns and autos on the road. The troop hugs the ditches. Hands and faces are covered with mud. Under trees along a hillside, a whole nest of vehicles with white tarpaulins, agglutinated like caterpillar legs.

It was broad daylight and 'Chicken' began to

groan at each step, like a new shoe which squeaks.

And, like that, moans matching the steps, the steps, the steps.

"Doche, Doche."

They marched, waiting for the whistle for the halt. He was waiting for it too and he had to march.

Then he said, and his words drooled out just under his nose, he was so weak, "Doche, I've had enough. My crotch is bleeding. I can't go on."

He sank flat on his back on the embankment. He remained there without moving, his gun on its strap, his pack on his back, all harnessed, his legs open. The crotch of his trousers is black with blood. He doesn't dare move. A sergeant has come up as if to sniff at him. 'Chicken' lifted his eyes, he said a word or two and the sergeant left again, sniffing along the troop.

They passed a great equipment park extending to the end of the plain, crammed with wires, pickets, sheets of metal. There were men there plaiting barbed wire with hands full of blood and bandages.

In the other squad, up ahead, they have thinned out. Already three in the embankment and there is one falling with all his equipment. They march on, he gets up. He has fallen on his nose. He wipes the

mud from his face. He has red snot in his moustache. That evening they cantoned in a barn directly opposite the heavy noise of cannon. The whole vessel of wood resounds with it. The air is shaken in eddies, pounces on the candle and extinguishes it. The saltpetre of the low wall becomes detached and falls.

* * * * *

At dawn: on your feet!

The road, the road, the whole earth is sweating out its men. A great hand is pressing the earth like a sponge and long streams of men are flowing through the grass and the trees.

Vernet is no longer there. No longer there either the one so tall that his whole head stuck above the others up ahead. Doche, yesterday, threw away the biscuits in his pack. Olivier has thrown away his biscuits, his cartridges, his underwear, a can of condensed milk. Nothing in the haversack, nothing in the canteen, just a little tobacco in the cartridge-pouch, there; and in the cartridge-pouch, there, a little gruyere. Keep going, what does it matter? And in spite of that, in the hollow of your

chest, the cross of the straps wounds you like the tip of a knife, and from time to time, the upper part of your thigh jams by mistake right into your belly as if you were splitting on a stake.

They went along a dead canal.

And over there on the other side there was a row of elms. Out of that row there crawls a train of three cars. A strong-backed locomotive, with its wily nose, heads into the wind, and moves along with short strokes of its side-rods, without whistling. The long neck of a gun emerges from the second car and, suddenly as it pointed toward the sky, it spits out a shell. The sky tumbles in pieces, the canal trembles. The train escapes behind the elms with a great hissing of steam.

Other mad cannons bark behind the hills. They have the short shriek of those who are about to howl at the moon. Further off, a whole pack of batteries fight madly at tearing up a piece of cloth.

The river of the noise overflows all at once and floods the valley. Your heart becomes swamped, your belly throbs; you lift your nostrils to breathe above it all and you keep on swallowing great gulps of noise which are there to writhe constantly in your bowels and rot your foundations.

You march.

About noon, a village in its muck. A crash of cymbals which echoes among the houses. You come toward the village. There is already some manure-water running down the sloping road.

Barns, then a square, and the road turns.

At this elbow of the road a man is standing; tall, fat, with a black raincoat. He is watching the men pass before him.

"Horse-face," growls Marroi. "You see him, the skunk?"

An officer comes out of the handsome house. He advances to the man with the raincoat, salutes and speaks. The man makes no reply, takes the chair, opens the folds of his coat and sits down, heavy, firm, leaning against the back.

He has his saber between his legs. He leans his hands on the hilt. He watches.

They pass by.

He has an evil and distraught look, quite panic-stricken, trembling, as though shaken by a wind which blows in his head, and that hard thing which he wishes at all cost to put into his eyes requires an effort which makes his mouth tremble.

They stopped at the base of a hill. The adjutant has come.

"Doche isn't there, the corporal? Doche! Ah! you're there? Listen: we stay here until after sundown. We'll enter by companies. Keep ammunition-belts on. Packs off, nothing but the packs. . ."

In the cup of the valley can be seen the phantom of a town in smoke.

The air trembles.

Sledge-hammers beat on the town; scraping hoofs scatter the houses, the death-agony like that of a bull bigger than the sky, a bull which doesn't wish to be killed, and which is being beaten to death furiously with great sledge-hammers. In the smoke, pieces of plaster fly out like flocks of pigeons. The air clears a bit, you see a sort of church, legs sticking up stiff, big belly distended, dead.

"That's Alsace?" asks Marroi.

"What is that?" asks Olivier.

"That what?"

"That town?"

"Verdun," says Doche.

"The slaughter-house," says Marroi.

Around it convoys on the gallop, automobiles at full speed on wooden runways, and the planks are dislodged behind them. Five or six men run toward a small wood. A troop in cadenced step

piles up at the bawling of a command, clicks its heels, draws its bristles of rifles. The bull's neck of a short gun pushes through a thicket to bellow.

Men come up, wipe it, caress its spine; it swells again, comes out of the thicket and bellows.

Soldiers, bunches of soldiers, standing, their guns at rest, are waiting to be used.

From time to time the big gun sticks its head out of the thicket, looks, bellows, then it hides and waits.

The adjutant has come back toward Doche.

"That's what I was telling you: Mazel cross-roads.... Three from the first battalion, and Lieutenant Andre is wounded in the thigh. He's just been brought back. They're looking for the bridge. The ones from the fourth have gone through the gardens. But there too it's full of barbed wire, you never know. They'll be ordered to run. The cross-roads double-quick . . ."

The order has come. They have started off. There's nobody but the sixth company. The captain up ahead keeps his own slow pace, like an old man.

They see the town, rather the shadow, because they are stumbling into blocks of night.

A water-melon of fire falls in the distance, bursts

over the roofs, spatters everything with its red juice.

A shell rips the sky. The whistle of the air. The field on the left splashes up like a lake and throws a wave of earth.

Olivier stops. All his bowels were about to come out in bunches.

"Get going," says the man behind him.

Another shell, over there in the field, the wave of earth, like the noise of a flock of pigeons: blurred up above, and it lands in the embankment. A splinter? A big one then!

The captain keeps his own slow pace, like an old man. We can't push him, really? Come on, it's easy, we want to run, the pack, the coarse cloth the rifle, the soreness, no, nothing any more, we're naked, we want to run. The houses, over there some cellars, cellars under the ground, down deep. The captain keeps his slow pace. There, to the left, a heavy mortar buttressed by its four legs bellows like a stag in the air, its neck stretched out, bellows, bellows, as loud as it can, powerful, bellows with its whole throat; rage throws it forward, its muzzle full of fire, then it draws back and bellows again.

Here are some soldiers without their sacks who

are marching rapidly. A fatigue-party.

One of them has a cane. They pass us.

"Don't go over there," Marroi shouts to them; kidding.

The one who has the cane turns, looks at us.

Over there, a bridge on an iron trestle. We can still see there a little.

The men who have just passed start to cross the bridge. One who has remained behind runs a few steps to join the others. A blow of a sledge-hammer, the whole road in bits is scattered in the air.

Marroi, Olivier, Doche, tangled, flat on their stomachs with their mess-tins and rifles, lying down in one mass by instinct. And already up again. Flocks of pigeons in the air.

"This way," shouts the captain.

He is standing in the field. He signals to them in the direction of the gardens.

Over there on the bridge, a gust of wind carries off the smoke. Five or six stretched out and one who is floundering like a mortally wounded rabbit. One man alone is running with all his might toward the town without looking behind him.

[to be continued]



A SONG FOR MICHAEL COONEY*

The towers of your heritage still stand,
the long coast,
rocks and the sea singing under the cliffs.
Rivers revolving in caves and at night the wind
and planets are yours. Great flocks of birds
fly up from the source of light filling the dark
with wing: in this rebirth you are gifted.

Your house is of earth, and your strength shall come from the ploughturned earth, from fishnets drying over the sand and those about you who shall be comrades —

We build this world for you.
Our dream that you shall inhabit,
the creative world,
the looms and the altars under the sky
in this region of peace, power of sunlight,
the courage of brothers and the strength of trees.

* Born at Easter time of this year, 1940

THE PHOENIX

Your body shall be a communication, your hands
shall be builders of monuments, your penis
the father of all life, and the great surfaces of skin
shall know all things — shall know sea, salt
and wind, shall know the fecundity of soil
and the cutting of rain, the world of sensation
open like a bursting fig to your powers.

Sing, because in the years before your birth no one
could sing. Dance, dance and make music
because in the years before your birth music
was murdered.

You shall remember the death that we conquered
but pass none of it to your children, none of
these things
we have known, our heritage of mechanical hell,
the years of killing and the diseases of steel,
the street of misery, the forbidden body
These things must be only as a myth to you,
so that you shall know that life springs at last
from the long ritual of such an age,
that peace shall survive.

Robert Symmes



J A Y W A L K

What journalistic joyrides night unfolds across the
sulphurous and simpering sky —

Whose hungry dog has on the bone of day
His one and lonesome tooth annulled? What cable
Sent sugar soaring? And what innocent table
Holds the tinsel now where Frankenstein
In pink and frightful antre hides? Is time
At 6 percent? We find that Mr. Morgan
Has leased the summer sun. The parish organ
Lost in tornado — last seen heading moonward.
— Hell, the princess said, there goes my garter.
The knives are sharp again. The days are shorter. —

*Look for bombs in the tea-cups. Hide the key—
The head on the pillow may be a spy.*

In lilac Gotterdammerung the gods
Put on pyjamas, smoke last cigarettes.
Nightfall. Lights out. Hear the sudden cry
The martyrs burn like fire-flies in the park.
Reptilian eyes. The iron tooth in the dark.

Where will day dawn — in what distant land?

Thomas Mc Grath

LAST BOAT FROM EUROPE

Evening shudders now and night
Takes one by one the drowning towers
Of eastern Europe, but no lights
Wake in the sight like lifted flowers :
Darkness now, over Europe. Even the moon is late.

The turrets of the Kremlin fall
In shadow. Warsaw, Rome, Berlin :
The scared face pasted on the wall.
London : the sleepers toss in vain :
Nightmare : La nuit blanche : the sleepless night
for all.

People are dreaming of a fast train :
Passport to somewhere in deepest desert.
Ticket to Asia by crack plane.
Hope is something that means distance.
Last boat at midnight. Time like a dull pain.

Look back and see the towers sway :
Guns are mounted on roof and wall ;
Soldiers look up at the stars and wait —
Look back, look back : the sky is falling.
Last boat from Europe : over the homeless sea.

Thomas McGrath

DARKNESS AMONG THE LEAVES

Darkness among the leaves and the leaves falling
Filling the dark pool and our lives all
Ill, as by autumn blighted the sick flowers
Flare in the transient splendor of final hours —

Darkness among the leaves ; and a slow spalling
Stills the hover of heart beat. Evening falls :
Call through the empty channels of ordered air :
Our questions answer. Not here ; not anywhere —

Not even among the leaves, by darkness taken
Not to be wakened, whom so long the hands'
Hounds have ached for : not among the leaves.
Listen. Wait : And hear my call across
The brittle balance of the frozen year.

SONNET

The sun defends its burning barricades
Against the Gothic terror of the night
And now along the purple hills the late
Last green bronze rider of the day has fled.
The darkness licks, like cat, the wound that bleeds
One star on evening. On the lonely earth
Is time now night. And fear. In other air
The sunlight sickens in a narrow bed.
See, then — across the callous curve of sky
The long war kindles and pursuit goes on
Where still past endless ambuscades of light
The darkness hunts the always fleeing sun.
O Comrade let us take what time allows —
This brief Forever in the heart of Now.

Thomas McGrath



THE DEMOCRATIC COMMUNITY

BY

Derek Savage



It is commonly believed that our time is witnessing a struggle between two forms of society, the totalitarian and the democratic. In a superficial form the present conflict between the European nations appears to be, and is claimed to be, such a struggle. In reality, of course, it is an external conflict merely between opposed totalitarian and near totalitarian interests. A genuine struggle against totalitarianism would be an internal effort in each of the "democratic" nations to free itself from all elements of totalitarianism — which is not done, shall we say, by introducing military conscription. Such an inward struggle between these two social conceptions is, however, undoubtedly in progress; it is the purpose of this essay to examine and clarify the issues involved.

In simple terms, the struggle is one between Man and the State. Democracy recognizes, implicitly or explicitly, the primacy of Man ; totalitarianism asserts the primacy of the State over Man. But this internal battle between Democracy and Totalitarian must not be conceived merely as a battle between rival ideologies. Rather is it a struggle of Man himself, in as much as he is self-conscious and reaching towards true realization of his humanhood, and the glacial pressure of Things. (For the men who declare for, or fail to resist, Totalitarianism, are men driven by external circumstance, depersonalized creatures.) Those who consciously, and with full awareness, declare for Democracy are claiming the sovereignty of man as against the forces of human enslavement. But for the most part the struggle proceeding is but a semi-conscious one between forces not fully cognisant of the meaning of their respective positions.

* * * * *

Looking at our world as it has existed since the Industrial Revolution it is impossible to resist the conclusion that there has been a gradual, steady movement towards what might be called the exter-

iorisation of society. A gradual increase in the volume and complexity of outward organisation has coincided with a corresponding impoverishment of inward, personal existence. Today there is an actual chasm between man as person and his society, that vast extra-personal framework of productive and distributive relationships which is now regarded as essential to the business of living.

Superficially it might appear that this highly complicated and delicately organised, interdependent structure of society is the servant of man. On reflection, however, it is evident that man is as much its slave as its master. The motor car and omnibus, the electric railway — to consider only forms of mechanized transport — appeared with an attractive promise of release from drudgery. They have become necessities. The external framework of society has expanded to absorb them, and men are now dependent upon them as much as they had previously been dependent upon their own physical methods of locomotion, while each new mechanical servant demands its own fresh supply of human drudges. From our immediate collective forbears we inherit a massive mechanical superstructure, and we go on extending and improving this superstructure, relying

more and more on external mechanisms and becoming increasingly enslaved to them. Our relationship with Science is rather like that of Faust with the devil. As a result of this the humanisation of social relations has become increasingly difficult. A reverse process has set in — the mechanisation of man.

For the sake of definition, let us make a distinction between Community, which is the inward participation of human persons, as such, in a common life; and Society, which is the organisation of man's multifold activities. In Community, relationships are concrete and personal; in Society they are generally abstract and extra-human, distorted by extraneous factors. In true Community a man is accepted for what he *is*; in Society other elements are introduced — what he *owns*, what he *does*. Society as at present constituted, being the larger, contains Community — contains, that is, communal groups of various kinds — families, Churches, associations of friends, of individuals who bear towards each other a distinctively human and personal relationship.

Previous to the Industrial Revolution, and the consequent tremendous increase in urbanisation,

there was to a very considerable extent an inter-fusion of Community with Society. In his daily toil a man dealt with the same people as those who entered into his private life. His work, indeed, was the central fact of his life in society, from which his other activities necessarily derived.

In our time, however, Community and Society have been separated. Community does not enter into social relationships, which are de-personalized by the collectivisation of our economic life. In the factory, the office, the department store, there is little room for personal relationships. The workers are productive or distributive *units*. They have been integrated, as units, into the externalized machinery of society. A process of robotisation has taken place.

* * * * *

What are the causes of this large-scale robotisation of human beings? The immediate causes are, obviously, economic. Civilisations are necessarily constructed around their productive and distributive techniques, and with the increasing complexity of such techniques the entire fabric of society has

expanded. Robotisation, the mechanization of men, is a direct consequence of industrialism.

Machine mass-production is different not merely in degree but in kind from the craft production of previous eras. The staccato, metallic rhythms of the machine have an abstract, anti-human quality, and the products of the machine also contain an anti-human element, disintegrative of our organic natural rhythm. When an article of whatever sort is produced by the direct physical labor of one or two men, the reproduction of that article results in a succession of original models, each calling into play similar qualities of brain and hand. Machine production, however, means standardisation and repetition of the prototype. The process of reproduction is automatic, the brain and hand faculties of the workman are not fully called into play.

Such repetition, when a complex article is manufactured, rationalises its production by distributing the manufacture of standardised parts, which are afterwards assembled; a division of labor which entails each worker being engaged upon a separate single process. Thus the mechanical nature of labor is intensified, the man still further subordinated to the machine, bearing still less responsibility, doing work of still lower human value.

With distribution of labor goes as an inevitable accompaniment the centralisation of power and responsibility, which are filched from the worker and placed in the hands of overseers and experts. This external centralisation makes of men impersonal units in the mechanism of production. Further, since the simplified nature of this labor directs and focuses the faculties of the individual to one process, calling forth thereby only a minimum of his resources and neglecting all his distinctively human potentialities for work of a creative character, there is inevitably a consequent atrophy, as it were, of the faculties not called into operation. Which means that men are no longer fulfilled by their work, they are not pitted in a creative struggle against its challenge to their human resources; they are degraded by it.

The great majority of people spend a major part of their lives working in order to obtain a livelihood. To their private lives they bring the personality which has been moulded — or distorted — by their work. And as the kind of work we commonly find ourselves doing has merely a nullifying effect upon our inmost being, as at our work we are denied the responsible exercise of our creativeness, so in our leisure we are again reduced to units in the mech-

anism of consumption, for even our amusements have been collectivised.

Such is the society in which the conception of democracy maintains a precarious foothold. Now, the fundamental tenet of democracy is the political equality of all individuals. Democracy assumes that each individual is a competent and responsible person, worthy of the control of his own political destiny. The present problem of democracy is somewhat as follows: is it possible to allow the privileges and duties of responsible self-government to masses of men who in the major part of their lives are not responsible human beings at all, but mere mechanical units? Theoretically, in our democracies, each individual is a responsible citizen, but in fact he is not, is not permitted to be by the very nature of his social functioning, by the very organisation of our society's basic structure. Therefore we are compelled to endure the present muddling and altogether vicious compromise of demagoguery. A vigorous and real democracy cannot exist without a stirring of vigorous, independent life among the body of society. But the masses, depersonalized by the vacuous quality of their daily lives, their humanity nullified, fall into a state of deadening inertia from which they can

only be stampeded by a demagogic rousing of their lower natures. They themselves are the raw material of dictatorships.

But more than that, the very structure of society, as specialization and collectivisation develop, demands a greater measure of centralisation in the political realm as in the economic. Just as industry daily moves towards greater self-consolidation, narrower centralisation, so does society as a whole — being, as it is, inextricably involved in and conditioned by its industrial functions.

And all this is a massive, inevitable pressure towards totalitarianism. Totalitarianism, it would seem, is the apotheosis of modern methods of manufacture and distribution. It is the one imperative solution to the problem of a collectivist, centralised, externalised society. It may be a fascist, a communist, or some milder form of totalitarianism. There is just one thing it cannot be, and that is a democratic one.

* * * * *

The word *democracy* has of late been more shamefully exploited, perhaps, than any other, with the

possible exception of the word *peace*. But however much we resent the hypocrisy of existing forms of "democratic" government, we have reached a point in history when there is only one choice before us—the realization and fulfillment of democracy, the positive affirmation of the worth of individual persons, or the negation of this belief which is totalitarianism. The very essence of totalitarianism lies in the absolute divorce it accomplishes between personality and society — the one debarred from all effective operation through the other. And this again is but an accentuation of existing circumstances. Totalitarianism means a further stride toward the complete exteriorsation of society — the isolation of persons from all participation in the inwardness of a communal relationship — the dead weight of the inert world of mechanisms crushing down the isolated soul of man.

Totalitarianism is essentially materialistic. For its subjects are not persons but things, to be objectively ordered and controlled. And in this, once again, it follows the pattern of modern industrialism. *Totalitarianism is the extension into the political sphere of conditions already obtaining in the sphere of industry.* It follows that if our existing highly cen-

tralized system is allowed to persist in its present form, it will eventually bring about its totalitarian culmination in the realm of politics.

How, in the face of this seemingly inevitable process of exteriorisation, can democracy be realised? Democracy as it at present exists is hardly more than convention. The *theory*, and some of the *machinery* of democracy exist, but both are made nugatory in practice. And here we discover a parallel between our essentially totalitarian industrialism masked by a conventionally democratic social system, and the ineffective *political* equality which is allowed to all men by the democratic franchise and their actual *economic* inequality. In both cases there is a formal assent to the democratic principle with a denial of this principle in practice. In organised society it is the depersonalising forces of industry which project through and determine our would-be democratic social system. In politics it is the power of property which extrudes into and determines the relations between men. Until society has a thoroughly practical groundwork of economic equality to measure the nominal political equality now existing, democracy cannot operate effectively. This is a commonplace ; yet it needs to be restated. Politics itself

cannot become truly human until it is separated from the compulsive interference of crude economics. The extrusion of economic factors into politics distorts it into a vehicle of property-relations rather than of relations between men. To say that economics must be separated from politics by the extension of political equality into the realm of economics, means simply that it must be made possible for men to have a specifically human social relationship, undistorted by existing extra-human considerations.

And just as the principle of equality must be carried into the economic sphere, so must the social principle of democracy — the recognition of each man and woman as a responsible human being in society — be carried into the industrial sphere, and responsibility and power be returned in as great a measure as possible to each individual worker.

This is, in effect, a statement of the necessity for the world of Men to arise and affirm itself against the depersonalising external trend of things. There must be a human, moral insurrection — an “insurrection of conscience”. What alternative is there? The only alternative is for the opposite process inevitably to take place, for man to allow himself to be subordinated utterly to money, to power, to

machines — for outward mechanisms to triumph over the inward being of mankind.

* * * * *

So much for our present analysis of the existing internal conflict between democracy and totalitarianism — the realities underlying those two conceptions are now perhaps, more evident. But it is not enough to state the existence of such a struggle and to leave the matter there. It is necessary to seek out the present area in which the struggle is most sharply manifesting itself, for only then can we make our will to democracy effective, can we play our part in the struggle that is going on.

At the time of writing, this country (Britain) is waging a war ostensibly in defence of democracy against totalitarian Germany. To defend democracy, however, you must first achieve it ; and as we have seen, this internal struggle is still proceeding within our own country. We have not yet achieved democracy. At any time, even in time of peace, our conventional democratic facade is liable to succumb to the compulsion of its totalitarian structure. In time of war this compulsion is increased enormously,

and in the process of waging the present war this country is, in actual fact, speedily transforming itself into a totalitarian State.

What, then, is the essential demand of the totalitarian State? That it shall have absolute centralised authority over persons—measured against the democratic statement that each person is himself a center of human responsibility and control. And this same demand for personal submission is the demand of the nation at war over its peoples. All personal interests, it is asserted, must be subordinated to the National Effort. Compulsory service of various kinds is introduced, notwithstanding that such compulsion is against the very spirit of democracy that is supposedly to be defended. At the point of war, in fact, not only are the principles implicit in democracy deliberately violated, but external society itself takes a further step towards totalitarian organisation. And war itself, the organisation and systematisation of killing the human beings of other nations, is itself utterly subversive of the moral values which alone give inward meaning to the conception of democracy. At present, the oppressive tendency to totalitarianism is resisted by the allegiance of human beings to general moral

values, but war itself, with all the inversion of human decency, all the glorified brutality, misery and slaughter that it involves, cheapens human life and abrogates the values that at present, let it be insisted, are our *only* bulwark against the totalitarian rationalisation of human society which, without a moral insurrection of the human order within society, is inevitable.

The internal conflict of capitalist democracy reaches a pitch of high intensity at the point of war, for just as it is here that the external order claims total rights over the inchoate personal order in society, so there is here the sharpest and most palpable division between those two orders. The contradiction at the heart of our present capitalist democracy (which phrase is a contradiction in terms) is nowhere more clearly exposed than in its reactions to the threat of war, in its legislation for conscription accompanied by vague pledges to future liberty, in its provision for Conscientious Objection.

This is not the place for examining the complicated question of the causes of war. But even the least reflective person must be impressed by the impersonality of this present conflict between the

Great Powers. It is much less a war of men than of things. It is almost as if men, too frail and weak to carry about the burden of their gigantic artificial superstructures of externalised social relations, are staggering impotently under the strain, their humanity is collapsing and the piled-up mechanisms they have fondly constructed and served are crashing against each other with a ruinous shock, dragging their reluctant human agents, inextricably involved in their own systems, along with them. It may well be that this war is the apocalypse of the machine that D. H. Lawrence prophesied in his poem :

So mechanical man in triumph seated upon
the seat of his machine
will be driven mad from himself, and
sightless, and on that day
the machines will turn to run into one
another
traffic will tangle up in a long-drawn-out
crash of collision
and engines will rush at the solid houses,
the edifice of our life
will rock in the shock of the made machine,
and the house will come down . . .

War, then, is the point at which human consid-

erations finally cease to count, at which every effort must be gauged, not as contributing towards human welfare, but in its effectiveness as contributing to the impetus of the "war machine" whose sole purpose is to commit crimes against humanity. Looking through textbooks on the subject of military organisation one incessantly encounters the claim of the right of the military authorities to exploit their "human materials" as best they can in the interests of "national defense" without regard to age, sex, or anything else but the purpose in view. And in a current work entitled *The Economic Effort of War* we read :

Ever since the last war we have been aware that modern warfare is economic war. The Allies' industrial and financial resources, rather than their preponderance in the field, decided the last war, and there is not much doubt that the group of nations which can produce armaments fastest will win this one. Once the initial stocks have been exhausted, the war will become a struggle of economic systems — in the long run the economic factor will be decisive.

In war time the externalising process of capitalist industrialism is intensified. The totalitarian necessities

of an industrial economy are deliberately extended into the realm of politics. But for the realisation of democracy, as we have seen, the *opposite* process must occur. We are forced to the conclusion that democracy itself is essentially pacifistic.

At the present time the issue between democracy and totalitarianism is being fought out, internally, between all those forces which are making for international war and those conscious persons who, setting their backs on war, proclaim their allegiance to the concrete, human principle of the centrality of Man in the life of the world. The pacifist alone is faithful to democracy, in striving towards the creation of conditions in which it may be fostered (for it can only be fostered in the recognition of the sanctity of personality). War denies this sanctity of personality absolutely. War itself is the deadliest contradiction of real democracy.

Here, then, is the struggle. Here we must take our stand.

* * * * *

It is clear that the conclusion of the present European conflict will see either an enormous speed-

up in the process of totalitarianisation which has been going on ever since the Great War of 1914-18, or the final reversal of that process, a realisation of essential democracy throughout the whole of society, based upon an inward revolution, a final realisation of the sanctity of personality. And while the tendency of *things*, of *events*, is clearly and and obviously totalitarian — well, that is inevitable in so far as they follow their own nature in isolation from the effective world of humanity. That is to say, humanity can and must assert its own superiority to the world of things, must create a humanly-centrifed order in which that sovranty is recognised, so that the falsely exalted world of mere mechanisms can fall into its natural place as subsidiary to the inward, personal world of man.

It is in friendship that we affirm the reality of persons— that is, by entering into an inward relationship with them, by mutual participation in the inwardness of personality. In its complex form such participation is Community.

We have already made a useful distinction between Community and Society. In Community there is social participation in the inwardness of the personal order. But this does not necessarily, or

usually, extend to Society as such, and in the present impersonal system of social relationships the communal element hardly enters at all. Now, in as much as democracy is real it implicitly affirms the reality of persons. But the reality of persons is not admitted in our present industrialised, metropolitan civilisation. And a merely formalised, nominal "democracy" will increasingly give ground before the onslaughts of totalitarian necessity – hence the ineffectiveness of the official labor movement, for example, in the face of war. The task of true democracy is seen to be nothing less than the realisation of Community within Society, and the gradual transformation of externalised Society itself into inward Community.

This communisation of society is a parallel activity to the elimination of economics from politics and the operation of democratic responsibility in the industrial sphere. It is part of the process of humanisation of social relations which must of necessity take place if we are not to suffer a relapse into the ice-age of totalitarianism.

The purpose of the democratic society is surely the development of the individuals within it – persons, not regarded as means to some external end,

but as ends within themselves. In the democratic society, therefore, each individual is regarded as a "repository or seat of sovereignty in a sense in which no State, league, union or confederation can ever be". Each individual person is a centre of society. It is when this inward human centrality is denied that it becomes possible to erect a false, externally centred system such as we have now, a system whose vacuous pressure depersonalises man and drives human aspirations into despair.

And necessarily, the result of the removal of emphasis from individual persons to the world of external things, is a vast increase in abstractness. Personality alone in society is a centre of concrete spiritual reality, and when this reality is denied there is of necessity a loss of reality in society itself. In removing itself from personal reality society has not found a corresponding "objective" reality of its own — quite the reverse. It attains more and more the quality of unreality, of fantasia. At its centre is emptiness, a gaping void.

The process of the communisation of society, the the establishment of the Democratic Community, is in essence a process of *concretisation*. First of all, it is necessary to assert the primacy of persons — the

assertion which is implicit in resistance to totalitarian war. Following from that, and taking all the time the concrete, individual person as the immovable standard of all social legislation and reconstruction the process of concretising, of *realising*, will have to occur.

* * * * *

I have tried to show that resistance to war is the first positive step to be taken in the struggle for the realisation of the Democratic Community. What follows on from that will transpire as events unfold themselves. No definite line of procedure can be laid down, except that always the most creative action must be taken in the face of existing circumstances.

Sooner or later, however, the application of the principle of human centrality to the actual structure of society will be necessitated. The present state of things, a half-hearted conventional democracy masking an incipient totalitarianism, cannot continue, and our present dilemma will be solved sooner or later by the naked emergence of one or other of these conflicting and entangled principles. It may

be that totalitarianism will hold the field, a rigid division enforced between persons and external society and that all human activity will be directed by intensified centralised control. If so, it may be for conscious persons to withdraw from the sphere of external conflict and to create among themselves the beginning of a new communal way of living in independence of the fiat of the totalitarian state. The present movement among the pacifists towards the formation of communities upon the land is of obvious significance in this connection.

But if our grasp of politics is not to be vague and untrustworthy, it is absolutely necessary to know where our acceptance of the principle of human centrality is going to lead us. What are the conditions for the thorough consolidation of the Democratic Community? What impedimentæ must we clear away from ourselves to ensure its realisation?

* * * * *

In pre-historic times, before the emergence of individual self-consciousness in the human whole, war it appears, was practically unknown. A web of unconscious community held the individual in an invi-

olate bond to his race or tribe. In *The Origin of War* Havelock Ellis says:

We do not find the *weapons* of warfare or the *wounds* of warfare among these Palæolithic remains . . . it was with civilization that the art of killing developed, i.e. within the last 10,000 or 12,000 years when Neolithic men (who became our ancestors) were just arriving.

And in *The Conquest of Violence*, Bart De Ligt has the following significant passage:

From about 800 years before Christ, a universal and a human conscience has slowly arisen in men and women of lofty intuition and profound sense of solidarity, in the more advanced civilisations. In China, India, the Near East, in Greece, people slowly began to see that violence, not only in the personal relations of man to man, but between people and people and race and race, could only be something provisional and ephemeral: that in the history of the world, the effort must be more and more toward a civilising unity of the globe, in self-realisation of the human race: and, for this self-realisation, there was need of an intense struggle,

which would nevertheless diminish in violence from the moment when violent methods could be seen to be in flagrant conflict with true human nature and the noblest goals of life.

Here, stripped of all magical coverings, are the essential conclusions reached by these forerunners of the new humanity:

Violence will be piled on violence, and war on war:

Empires will tear each other in pieces so ferociously that finally war, famine and pestilence will rage as never before :

But then, the whole system of violence throughout the world will crumble, and universal peace, so fervently hoped for by the martyred peoples, will come, and justice for one and all will be established on earth.

The innocent, primitive harmony of mankind was broken up by the emergence of individual consciousness and self-will, and a long, bloody reign of Power and Property began. Are we, perhaps, witnessing the culmination of this reign in our own time? For it is evident that Power and Property

have overreached themselves, and their sole purpose and rationale has come to be mutual destruction on a scale never before known. And just as we must finish with war, so we must see an end of the domination of power and property over human life. Enriched by the manifold experience of the past, it is now imperative that humanity should enter into an order of *conscious* Community, aware of its profound solidarity. A Community in which relations are on the human level and not on that of property and power. Such a state will certainly be one of World Unity.

But here it is necessary to be wary of current political conceptions of World Unity, which must be a positive realisation of the inward bond between all men, and not an external organisation only of the outer fabric of civilisation. Such unity cannot, in fact, be externally imposed— it is no matter of mere organisation. It must grow from good roots, or it will be what Coleridge called “a spurious and rotten growth.” And here, as elsewhere, we discover the operation of totalitarianism and democratic values in opposition. World Unity cannot be the fruit of a miraculous surrender on the part of national states to a centralised World Gov-

ernment. The false sovereignty of the state must be surrendered, not externally, not in a further removal of power from individuals, but internally—surrendered to the claim of each man and woman within the nation for the restoration of his and her personal sovereignty! For the unity of the world is an inward, and not an outward, reality. Each man, as a responsible individual, must claim his personal share of power in the ordering of his own life and that of the Community of which he is a member.

This spontaneous claiming of personal sovereignty one visualises as the gradual emergence of small conscious centers of the new order of society here and there all over the world — perhaps even while the old order is vainly destroying itself with its own lethal appurtenances. Such, I think, will be conscious humanity's response to the calamitous situation into which it has been precipitated. And these small centres, necessarily in a close relationship to the soil, and therefore independent of much of the pressure of existing society, will kindle a light which eventually will spread to a continuous, world-wide glow of illumination.

What can we hope to find, in a practical sense, in a society altogether transformed by the inward

principle of conscious Community? Firstly, an enormous decrease in centralisation, the devolution of power through all its stages to the individual. This decentralisation will be both industrial and geographical, we shall see a disappearance of hideous, bloated metropolæ, coincident with a disappearance of the mass-production factories, the emergence of smaller, agrarian population centres where concrete, human relationships replace the rootless impersonality of modern cities. And a concrete relationship, too, will surely be restored to men in their work. The land itself will be the standard of material life. The rule of money will disappear. There will be a return of the pride in personal craftsmanship.

The discovery of the commercial possibilities of the machine came into a world of imperfectly human social relations within the human whole, and the machine became the instrument of the enrichment of the few at the expense of the degradation of the many. The machine itself arose from a dislocation in the wholeness of man's nature, a dislocation which it intensified and, as it were, externalised. For instance, it brought about an intensification of man's separation from Nature — not simply the

inward separation that had been accomplished by Christian ascetism, but an actual, physical separation also, so that many human beings are today brought up in great cities without ever seeing a green field.

The only society that is truly fit to make use of the machine at all is a society in which the personality of each member is respected absolutely. Such a society would never permit the utilisation of human personalities as mere tools.

It is such a society that we mean when we speak of the Democratic Community.

There is no question at all of a regression— as might be charged by those who view “progress” merely as one of externals— to the hierarcical society of any previous era. For previous hierarchies have always been founded upon outward things rather than inward; impersonal rather than personal. Hitherto, outward things have projected into and conditioned the inward order of personality. Now the reverse process must take place. An inward hierarchy will gradually manifest itself— a hierarchy founded, not upon property and power but upon the organic inequality of man; enforcing no obedience, but claiming and finding it spontaneously.



RECORDS RECEIVED

REVIEWED BY

John Lynes

Our favorite of all the records we have received in the past few months is the recording of the Schubert Quartet No. 8 in B flat played by the Busch Quartet (Victor Album M-670). This opus, almost never included in the repertory of string quartets, reveals Schubert to be a more profound composer at the age of seventeen than Mendelsohn evidenced in «Midsummer Night's Dream», which was written at the same early age. The second movement must take rank with the most inspired of Schubert's creations. The first movement, claimed to have been written in four and a half hours, is not as smooth as much of his later work but it has a strange similarity to the dramatic power of the mature Beethoven. The third and fourth movements are charming, though quite conventional. Adolf Busch and his quartet record this work with great delicacy and just the right amount of «interpretation».

Another slightly known chamber work which deserves some notice is the Dvorak String Sextet in A Major, opus 48, recorded for Victor in Album No. M-661 by the Budapest Quartet with Forbes, violist, and Moore, cellist, assisting. It stands up alongside of the Brahms sextets (with which it is unavoidably compared) as a fine example of writing for six individual instruments. Though its form and development are not as subtle as Brahms, Dvorak's fine contrapuntal style and lovely melodic lines keep the whole composition interesting. The Budapest Quartet plays as faultlessly as ever.

Upon fairly thorough investigation, the high spot in the Decca catalogue of foreign recordings appears to be the set of six Handel concerti grossi, recorded on thirteen 12-inch disks by the Boyd Neel String Orchestra. These six Handel masterpieces rank with the best music of the early 18th century and deserve the simple and effective performance of this English ensemble.

(Nos. 25655 to 25667 - D. Complete set: \$ 9.75. Single discs: 75c)

Two familiar 18th century symphonies have been recorded by Columbia: The Haydn «London» played by Sir Thomas Beecham and the London Philharmonic, M-409, and the Mozart «Prague», played by Stock and the Chicago Symphony, M-410. The

purity of such music preserves it from the need of such promotion as "Bruckner Societies" and "all Wagner Concerts". It will always be a tonic to anyone who likes music simple, un-programmatic and impersonal.

Not a new recording but outstanding enough to deserve mention here is the Hindemith String Trio No. 2 ('1933'), Columbia M - 209. This one composition alone justifies the high standing of Hindemith among contemporary composers. The performers, Simon Goldberg, violinist, Emanuel Feuermann, cellist, and Hindemith, violist, play this difficult score with such ease and precision that it is impossible to judge the music with complete objectivity on the first hearing. Hindemith allows the forms and themes to be quite traditional and displays his greatest individuality and skill in his rhythmic patterns and, despite the natural limitations of a string trio, in the use of his amazing harmonic system.

Now included in the repertory of all American symphony orchestras and recently recorded by Koussevitsky and the Boston Symphony in Victor M - 651 is Roy Harris's Symphony No. 3. It deserves this recognition. Without exactly knowing why, this work impresses one as being decidedly American. This may be explained by the similarity of of some of the themes to native folk tunes. Harris's

mature technique allows him to use very simple material and still keep the work exciting. The Boston helps tremendously to put this new work over.

Arturo Toscanini and the B. B. C. Symphony have recorded Beethoven's Fourth Symphony for Victor. This album, M-676, is no exception to that rule that Toscanini's interpretation of Beethoven never misses. His method seems to be to find just the right tempo, then to drive the men beyond their usual capacities. Victor's attempt to brighten the covers of their albums results in this case in a Hollywood interpretation. Handsome Beethoven shows the score of the Fourth to a blond glamor girl.

The Roth Quartet has recorded the G Minor quartet, Opus 33 No. 5, of Boccherini in the Columbia album, X-170. Although Boccherini (a needlessly neglected composer) has a somewhat older style of writing than his contemporary, Haydn, all of his writings which we have heard have been full of charm and the same kind of vitality. This short quartet, typical of his other works, is smoothly played by the Roth ensemble.

Six early American ballads have been collected, arranged and recorded by John Jacob Niles, for Victor Album M-604. This album is decidedly a

one man show. Mr. Niles, whom Victor calls a mountaineer, travelled through the hill country of the South collecting these ballads from street singers and small county fairs. He plays his own accompaniment on an ancient dulcimer. Some of the loveliest of these ballads have been traced back to Elizabethan England.

Ernst Wolff, baritone who accompanies himself on the piano, has already recorded for Columbia a number of classical and romantic German songs. In a new release, X-168, he selects a remoter period, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. All of the seven pre-art songs which he has recorded in this album are most interesting. His singing is effective though just a bit too cautious.

ALSO RECOMMENDED:

Victor M-677: Brahms piano concerto in D Minor, opus 15, played by Artur Schnabel and the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Columbia X-166: Prokofiev Classical Symphony, played by the Minneapolis Symphony conducted by Mitropoulos.

Columbia X-171: Eleven Short Piano Pieces written and played by Ernst Krenek.

Victor M-663: Dvorak Symphony No. 2, Opus 70. played by the pre-Munich Czech Philharmonic.



CORRESPONDENCE SECTION

Nothing is so mistrusted, maligned at this time as "experimental writing". Each day a host of critics from all sides heralds its death. There is no time in their world for experiment; there is no time for discovery; there is no time to open up the way toward a complete awareness, to reveal the true nature of experience — there is no time for any of this when the machinations for production and distribution of objects must be perfected, when revolutions must be fought for political control of these machinations, or a war must be carried on, men must be killed for Freedom, Peace, Democracy and the continuance of these machinations. They all agree — the Fascisms, the democracies, the oligarchies, the Communisms (of all the Internationals and splinters from Internationals), agree that the man alone is to be mistrusted, destroyed; that if there have been Buddhas, Lao-Tzes, Christs—there must be no more of them; that any *being* which exists apart from the physical (sensual) world is an illusion; that the Saint, the mystic or the experimenter is an irresponsible member of Society.

They have a fear of experiment, a fear of the *soul*; they have a fear that a revelation might be made. That the house, the body, the *object* in its endless

manifestations, for which they oppress, revolt and kill— that that world of securities might be an illusion, an insanity. Today, the great mass of humanity has a hatred for the discoverer, a terror of nakedness, an absolute denial of any validity to laws other than their own, to compulsions other than those taking place in that destructive illusion of security values to which they cling.

Some are outside of it. "Experiment" continues— investigation of what is known, the communication of what is taking place and the continual drive forward to extend the understanding, to bring everything into consciousness. It is for those writing with such a purpose that RITUAL is being continued under the new name, the EXPERIMENTAL REVIEW.

The meaning of the Experiment then is not to create a new object; it is not to propagandize an eccentricity or an originality; it is not to start a new *school*. The experiment is not literary— not a research in words but a research in the creative life with the artist as a unit of discovery freed from political or religious formulas.

The EXPERIMENTAL REVIEW will investigate the the nature of values, objects, dreams, tensions within the social and economic order as well as the more involved states of consciousness— the nature of the primitive, the saint or the mystic.

Robert Symmes, Editor
EXPERIMENTAL REVIEW
Woodstock New York

I don't believe that things are hopeless. I do believe that the situation is hopeless unless something really revolutionary is done. And when I say "revolutionary" I don't mean anything outward so much as I mean something inward. That is, something working outward from our own inner being. I do believe that it is possible for that to happen. And if it did happen I wouldn't say that it would stop us from getting into war, tho it might. I do believe that it would keep a fire burning thru this dark night

I am not fatalistic about the future, however. I believe even more firmly than ever in the force, the power, and the glory of the spirit. It is not the world around me that bothers me so much as things within myself. I do *believe in the* efficacy of the spirit. I do believe that the black thunderous clouds that have suddenly risen up from all our evils and threaten to blot out the light of sanity can be pierced and broken by the lightening of some great spiritual ascension. But that and only that can save us. Otherwise we will drift, as though under some evil spell, into a world of unreality, where reason and goodness will be but faint stars. It will be as though we are drawn like sleepwalkers into great human streams, into a deathward river. Now the parade is just forming. It isn't events that I'm thinking of so much as it is a procession, a progression, of spiritual dissolution. Even now it is difficult for the sanest elements to see the light of day, to hold a true

perspective, a rational structure of thought, and remain above the sub-human strata of human feelings. This rupture of corruption into hysteria and animal being is highly contagious. It is enveloping many individuals whose development was going in another direction, who were endeavoring to cope with the world in which they lived and see the light of a new horizon. But they were attached with the world and the world's way, and they sink with its temporal sun. There remain but a very few solitary individuals, mere handfuls of men, who have cast their affinities into the fiery search for reality and fulfillment: the lonely men who search for God.

We are alone. But we are not alone. I feel more than ever that God is *with* us, that in this great vomiting up of life and death, in this great hemorrhage of the heart of man, that there are in us light rays from another dimension, and a power that is struggling desperately as though caught in a trap; an otherness of personality and a higher aspect of reality, a fulfillment of inner being that would break through the outer world of matter and dead flesh if we would but fulfill the conditions of its existence. As imaginary as it may seem in the face of all that is happening, I believe that it is none the less real, that the power and the light of spiritual being is the real condition of peace, and that it can transcend the power of violence.

Over the week-end I've been reading a pamphlet

by Charles E. Raven called, *The Starting Point of Pacifism*. It is one in a series put out by the P.P.U. It is very good. In it he says something which is very pertinent to the question as to what kind of activities pacifists might engage in. I would send it to you but for the fact that I need it right now. Here are some excerpts from it:

«To live as persons in a society of persons and with them to work for the overthrow of evil by meeting it in its most demonic form is our task. Lest this seem too vague a statement it will be well to look at what it involves. We are all agreed that a purely negative and individual refusal to fight, valuable as it may be as protest and witness, does not discharge our obligation The human way for which they are trying to stand needs to be expressed if not in a programme, at least in a quality of temper and in actions appropriate to it. A programme is perhaps not desirable: it would mean the narrowing of a life of human fellowship into obedience to particular rules or advocacy of particular reforms ... Some of us will find our personal work in one field of adventure, some in another. Some will explore new ways of social life in communities like the Bruderhof or orders like that of St. Francis. Others will give themselves to immediate needs, the service of refugees and the evacuated or the creation of centres of pooled expenditure and simplicity of life. Others, bringing into the movements a sense of perspective and human values, will take part in or-

ganised effort for social, industrial or political change. Others will seek to restore to religion its true place in life, its true character and energy. There is need for a diversity of operations even as there is in each of us his own particular aptitude and urge. Provided the central purpose is not forgotten, and the work is done in and for the human way, variety will be strength and not weakness.»

Robert Williams, Editor

NEW HORIZONS

152 West Schiller St., Chicago, Illinois

Even if one is not physically embroiled in the war, even if one tries to keep sufficiently detached from its devastation, one unconsciously feels its weight, and its effect on me is to make initiative for anything even remotely creative, like letter writing, very difficult.

I expect you will have heard from Derek Savage recently. I have especial admiration for his courage just now. I can imagine what it is like to live in England now as a pacifist. It is but a peculiar chance that I am living here and am not sharing his trials. It might be better for me if I were— but it would seem to be folly to deliberately go back into it.

I particularly enjoyed the Easter issue of *The Phoenix* — more than any before. And the highlights to me, were Lawrence's War Letters, Kendon's long poem, and Derek's essay. I am afraid I did not like «James Thomson». True though it may be, it was

so ruthlessly devastating and cruelly true that my mind would not accept it . . .

With love and very best wishes to you all, and with the hope that when this upheaval has subsided sufficiently for new plans to be made, a way will open out for our meeting again. But the collapse of capitalism in America will surely shake the continent as seriously (but in a different way) as Europe is being shaken this time. You are right in your vision, for of all man's activities the culture of the land is alone eternal.

K. B.

Ireland

I'm afraid I have been long in thanking you for sending me a copy of *The Phoenix*. I thought I must write and tell you how impossible it is for me to subscribe to anything else, or to read anything else, (you should see my pile of «matter» to read!) But when my friend, Lady Gibb, (with whom I live) and I, had read it we felt we must say the opposite, and ask you to send it! It is so refreshing to have it from your side of the water, with its freshness and difference, although many of the contributors, I note, are from Europe. Anyway, many thanks for it, and all best wishes for its success. We have to look to America more and more now that Europe is a chaos.

A. Ruth Fry

Suffolk, England



EDITORIAL NOTE

Because of extremely pressing circumstances bound up with our imminent departure from Woodstock and our journey to a neglected old farm on the southern coast of Georgia, these lines can be but a hasty postscript to the present issue. We had planned to include reviews of several books — among them Jean Giono's *Joy of Man's Desiring*, and Waldo Frank's *Chart for Rough Waters*. I had hoped, also, to have enough time to editorily reaffirm the indestructable truths and human hopes — now so terribly obliterated and seemingly lost — to which *The Phoenix* is unwaveringly dedicated. But our old readers know these, and new readers can glean them from the contents of this issue.

The farm to which we are moving is located at *Saint Marys, Georgia*. The farmlands border the mouth of a tidal river, and there are about 50 acres that are not hopelessly overgrown and which can gradually be restored to cultivation. It will be a difficult task, but it is one that we take on gladly. If the War Department and the government officials allow us to work there in peace and honour, we are confident that we shall succeed in restoring the land and opening a way for others who wish to join us.

James Peter Cooney

